

A Social History of the University Presses in Apartheid South Africa

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A Social History of the University Presses in Apartheid South Africa

Between Complicity and Resistance

By

Elizabeth le Roux



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This work is dedicated to Steven and Juliette

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Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AWA	African Writers' Association
FRP	field of restricted production
GIS	geographical information systems
IPASA	Independent Publishers' Association of South Africa
ISBN	international standard book number
NLSA	National Library of South Africa
NP	National Party
OUP	Oxford University Press
PASA	Publishers' Association of South Africa
PCB	Publications Control Board
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SANB	South African National Bibliography
SPRO-CAS	Study Project on South African Christianity in Apartheid Society
UCT	University of Cape Town
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal (formerly the University of Natal)
UFH	University of Fort Hare
Unisa	University of South Africa
UNP	University of Natal Press
VOC	Dutch East India Company
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WUP	Witwatersrand University Press

Introduction

Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins University is often quoted as noting that “it is one of the noblest duties of a university to advance knowledge and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures but far and wide.”¹ The diffusion of knowledge is the core function of the university press, which supports knowledge production through its scholarly publishing programme. Scholarly publishing is an important part of the intellectual life of a nation, particularly in the context of the knowledge economy. Some of the earliest publishing in South Africa may be classified as scholarly, and it was produced by the mission presses and publishing houses set up by immigrants to the Cape in the nineteenth century. For instance, early publishing efforts at Lovedale Mission Press included the first works of George M. Theal, who was to become a famous and influential historian in South Africa. Yet the kind of publisher most often associated with scholarly publishing, the university press, was not established until much later, in the twentieth century.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, South Africa followed a gradual process of decolonisation. The expansion of South African higher education after key decolonising moments – notably the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, and even more extensively after the declaration of a Republic in 1961 – led to a sharp increase in the number of local universities, academics, and scholarly publications. This increase was accompanied by the formation of publishing divisions at some of the universities. These were the precursors of the university presses. University presses are often said to lie between the ‘cathedral’ and the ‘market.’² What this means is that they have to balance the symbolic capital of knowledge production and the economic capital of commercial viability, to use Bourdieusian terms.³ South Africa’s university presses now find themselves in this position, but historically they were not: cushioned by subventions, they did not compete with commercial publishers, and at the same time, their role was more supportive and service-oriented than acquisitive or interventionist. In addition, the balance was complicated

1 Quoted in Chester Kerr, *The American University as Publisher* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), p. 3.

2 Henry Chakava, ‘An African Commercial and Textbook Publisher,’ in A. Mlambo (ed.), *African Scholarly Publishing Essays* (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2007), p. 74.

3 Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The market of symbolic goods,’ *Poetics*, 14(1/2) (1985), pp. 13–44.

by a third pressure, which assumed overwhelming significance in this country: the political. The motivation of those opposing apartheid was neither profit nor prestige, but activism for the purpose of political change – a significant difference.

There are now four active university presses in South Africa, the earliest dating back to the early twentieth century. The Witwatersrand University Press (also commonly known as Wits University Press, or WUP) was established in 1922, and is the oldest university press in South Africa. The University of KwaZulu-Natal Press was founded as the University of Natal Press (UNP) in 1948, and the University of South Africa (Unisa) started publishing in 1956. Fort Hare University ran a press from the 1960s until the early 1990s, but is no longer actively publishing under this imprint, despite sporadic efforts to revive it. The University of Cape Town Press, established in 1993, is now owned by a commercial academic publisher, Juta. UCT continues to publish from time to time under the name of the university alone – as it did on occasion before the formal establishment of the Press – in addition to the imprint. The other South African universities also publish in their own name occasionally, but not through the channel of a university press.

These university presses emerged and functioned within a specific historical context. The development of education and of publishing in the former British colonies in general has followed a particular pattern, imitating the British models of universities and their presses. The South African experience of print culture is not unique in this regard. However, South Africa's Dutch colonialist experience had an important impact, too, not least on the late introduction of printing in this country – in 1796, after years of delay by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) – as well as on the promotion and development of Afrikaans. This mingling of colonial experiences has led to certain unique characteristics, which emerged particularly during the twentieth century, and in intensified form after the introduction of the apartheid policies from 1948 onwards. The history of publishing from that point onwards is marked by increased domination of the state and an array of repressive legislation, especially censorship or the threat of censorship, and increased segregation of the country's population groups.

The emergence of apartheid provoked a wide spectrum of responses, ranging from the extreme of collaboration and complicity, to the middle ground of silence and tacit acceptance, to the opposite pole of opposition and resistance. The universities fell between these extremes. With the imposition of the policies of separate development on the universities, certain academics and students came into conflict with the state. Between the poles of collaboration and resistance, the universities became a significant site for disputes around the

concept and practice of academic freedom. The history of those institutions and of their academics is thus both historically and politically important. But what of the freedom to publish, and especially the publishing institutions most intimately connected with the universities themselves – the university presses? Where did these presses fall on the scale of responses to apartheid, and how did they reflect their insertion in a wider social context?

To answer such questions, we need to look to the historical experiences of the publishing industry broadly, and of the university presses in particular. Because publishing is an important cultural industry, historians seeking sources look to its products as these form part of the record of our social and cultural history. These products, like the broader forms of records that are usually maintained and preserved in archives, make up society's "accessible memory" of itself.⁴ However, less attention has been given to the history of such publishing houses themselves and to the potential sources for social history that may be located in the records of these publishers – the voluminous correspondence, financial information, manuscripts, policies, peer review reports, and so on – or to what John K. Young refers to as "cultural, social, and textual histories as reflected and represented through editorial theory and practice."⁵ What South African publishing histories exist tend to have focused either on oppositional publishing or on the publishers that formed part of the Afrikaner establishment, such as Nasionale Pers ('National Press') and its subsidiaries. But, with university press publishing falling between these two extremes of resistance and complicity, it may have been ignored thus far due to a perception that it had little to tell us about either apartheid or the struggle against it. Perhaps as a result, this area has not been studied at all. In contrast, however, I argue that such publishing can tell us a great deal about academic freedom within a constrained society.

While apartheid had a constraining effect on freedom of expression in South Africa, this book considers whether, while some universities became known for an anti-apartheid stance, the university presses responded by playing a similarly oppositional role. Examining the university presses enables us to examine intellectual and political trends, and to consider to what extent academic freedom has been shaped or distorted by ideology. At the same time, the study of institutions like publishers or universities reveals many contradictions, as universities serve different audiences and accommodate a variety of ideologies at any one time.

4 Beverley Brereton, 'Models vs. Reality: Appraising publishing records' (MAS thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998), p. 1.

5 Young, John K., *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African-American Literature* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), p. 185.

The Print Culture Context

Print culture has come only relatively recently to South Africa. The history of printing in South Africa dates back to the late eighteenth century, with the first printing press being installed in Cape Town in the 1790s. The first publishing enterprises started soon afterwards, developed by missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century to spread the Word more widely – with possibly the best-known examples being established at Lovedale, in the Eastern Cape, in 1823, and Morija, in what is now Lesotho, in 1861. Newspapers were also introduced, amid a climate of censorship and control, from 1824. As far back as the 1700s, the Dutch authorities in the South African colonies prevented publication that they considered subversive, while a century later the British authorities suspended publications for contravening a stipulation “not to publish material of a political nature.”⁶ The early censorship of newspapers and incidence of state intervention, as Oliphant points out, set the pattern for the future. He argues that, “[t]hroughout the history of South Africa, and with different degrees of intensity, the State would intervene to safeguard the interests of minority rule.”⁷

Kahn has traced the origins of censorship legislation to the influence of English law, rather than Roman Dutch law.⁸ The origins of South African legislation may be found in the Obscene Publications Act (1892) of the Cape of Good Hope, which aimed “to prevent the Sale or Exhibition of Indecent or Obscene Books, Pictures, Prints and other Articles.”⁹ In an echo of what was to come, the Act did not create an enforcing body but rather established powers of search and seizure: the Resident Magistrate could authorise any “constable or police officer to enter in the daytime” into any house, shop, room or “other place,” using force where necessary, and to “search for and seize” any indecent or obscene publications found.¹⁰ Further legislation, controlling the importing

6 A.W. Oliphant, ‘From Colonialism to Democracy: Writers and Publishing in South Africa,’ in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 111. Also see Adrien Delmas, ‘From travelling to history: An outline of the VOC writing system during the 17th century,’ in A. Delmas and N. Penn (eds), *Written Culture in a Colonial Context: Africa and the Americas 1500–1900* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2011), p. 116.

7 Oliphant, ‘From colonialism to democracy,’ p. 111.

8 E. Kahn, ‘*When the Lion Feeds* – and the Censor Pounces: A Disquisition on the Banning of Immoral Publications in South Africa,’ *South African Law Journal*, 83(3) (1966), pp. 278–336.

9 Quoted by the Film and Publications Board, ‘Censorship to Classification’ (2010), Available online: <www.fpb.co.za>.

10 Ibid.

(customs acts) and distribution (postal acts) of publications, supported this authority. Before Union in 1910, each of the colonies making up South Africa was governed by its own legislation in this regard.

The oldest continuously operating (secular) publishing house was established as recently as the mid-nineteenth century, in 1853, by a Dutch immigrant, Jan Carel Juta. Several small, often family-owned houses were established in the years that followed, such as Thomas Maskew Miller's eponymous press in 1893 and the Central News Agency (better known as the CNA) in 1896. Early publishing in the Cape Colony was in a variety of languages, in English, Dutch and occasionally French and the local African languages, and printing spread throughout the British and Boer colonies before the Anglo-Boer War. But very little of what was published in the nineteenth century was in book form; rather, the focus was on newspapers and various forms of ephemera, such as almanacs, brochures, pamphlets, and blank order forms. As Anna Smith notes, "book-printing as such had to wait for the twentieth century."¹¹

In the early years of the twentieth century, a few more local book publishers and then a number of international publishing houses began to set up shop in the colonies of Southern Africa. In 1910, the Union of South Africa was formed, and the nascent country supported Britain in the world war that broke out in 1914. In 1915, with the world still at war, Oxford University Press opened a South African office to distribute its books. In the same year, J.L. van Schaik began publishing locally and the Nasionale Pers ('National Press') was established. Just a few years later, in 1922, the first university press would be established, at the newly formed Witwatersrand University.

The development of publishing and other forms of media also saw the evolution of censorship legislation, with the Entertainments (Censorship) Act, No 29 of 1931 aiming "to regulate and control the public exhibition and advertisement of cinematograph films and of pictures and the performance of public entertainments," evidently in response to the distribution of new broadcasting media.¹² The Act also created a Board of Censors with powers to approve or reject films, although Kahn notes that "[l]ittle use was made of the statutory powers to suppress locally-produced books or other publications."¹³ However, because this Act focused on the control of films and public entertainment, rather than publications, it was later felt that it should be expanded, to find ways and means of combating "the evil of indecent, offensive or harmful literature."¹⁴

11 A.H. Smith, *The Spread of Printing: Eastern Hemisphere. South Africa* (Amsterdam: Van Gendt and Co, 1971), p. 131.

12 FPB, 'Censorship to Classification.'

13 Kahn, 'When the Lion Feeds,' p. 286.

14 Ibid.

At this time, although the early book publishers were beginning to make their mark, the vast majority of books, especially in English, were still imported. This was a common practice in the British colonies, which satisfied most of their publishing needs by importing books from the metropole. However, the pattern in South Africa was complicated by the multilingual situation, and in particular the strong promotion of Afrikaans due to the imperatives of Afrikaner nationalism: thus, on the one hand, “[t]he post-colonial period from 1910 to 1960 saw the development of a very strong publishing movement in support of the strong Afrikaner language nationalism which grew after the Anglo-Boer War,” while on the other hand, “[m]ost books in English were imported from Britain, and most South African writers published in British publishing firms.”¹⁵ Afrikaans was promoted as a language through the activities of a number of newly formed local publishing houses, among them Van Schaik and the newspaper and book publishing groups of Nasionale Pers and Perskor (the latter an abbreviation of the Afrikaans term for ‘Press Corporation’). A power struggle between the English and Afrikaans-speaking Establishment was reflected in the growth and development of publishing houses catering for these language groups.

Because of these unique factors – as well as the specific political circumstances introduced in 1948 (the coming to power of the National Party) and 1961 (when South Africa became a Republic) – the trajectory of publishing in South Africa diverged from the general Anglophone pattern. This pattern may be briefly illustrated by the Australian example: in that country, until World War II, the demand for books was largely satisfied by imports from Britain. The war hampered the circulation of books internationally, and widespread shortages of paper had a constraining effect on publishing in Britain, as well as other countries. For a number of reasons, local publishing began to grow and then to flourish after the war, emerging from what the publisher Allen Lane called an “absorbent phase” into a “creative phase.”¹⁶ The publishing industry continued to grow until the late 1970s, when a world-wide economic recession led to a downturn in local publishing, and the influx of multinational companies. In the 1990s, Australian publishing again experienced a resurgence, followed by a renewed dip, again linked to the effects of global recession, in 2009.

15 A.S.C. Hooper, ‘History of the South African publishing and book trade,’ in P.E. Westra and L.T. Jones (eds), *The Love of Books: Proceedings of the Seventh South African Conference of Bibliophiles* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1997), p. 72.

16 Quoted in Xuemei Tian, ‘Book Publishing in Australia: The potential impact of digital technologies on business models’ (D.Phil thesis, RMIT University, Australia, 2008), p. 16.

But the South African publishing industry was partially insulated from such world-wide trends. While other countries experienced a downturn in the 1970s, government support for educational publishing and for the promotion of Afrikaans publications created a counter-trend. Moreover, the impact of economic sanctions during the 1970s and 1980s and the withdrawal of a few multinational companies served partly to stimulate the local publishing industry, as certain publications could not be imported. Paradoxically, this may have had a stimulus effect on local publishing efforts. As Hacksley points out, “[w]ith the withdrawal of multinational publishers during the cultural boycott of South Africa in the late seventies, the influence of the old colonial models declined.” The result was that, “[a]s more South African writers were published for South African readers, local voices became more audible.”¹⁷

At the same time, the increasing scope of censorship affected the growth and development of new publishing houses. A Commission was established in 1954 to investigate the matter of so-called undesirable publications, under the leadership of Professor Geoffrey Cronjé of the University of Pretoria. Cronjé – a sociologist and criminologist who became notorious for his justifications of apartheid – would argue in his report in 1957 that “[t]he publishing of undesirable literature amounts to nothing else than abuse of the freedom of publication – for the benefit of the publisher concerned, but to the detriment of the community.”¹⁸ From this report and the ensuing debate on what constituted an “undesirable” book, emerged the first apartheid-era censorship legislation, the Publications and Entertainment Act, No. 26 of 1963. The Act created a Publications Control Board, which had the authority to prohibit “undesirable” publications, on the basis of the following categories (quoting from the Act):

- Is indecent or obscene or is offensive or harmful to public morals;
- Is blasphemous or offends the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the inhabitants of the Republic;
- Brings any section of the inhabitants of the Republic into ridicule or contempt;
- Is harmful to the relations between any sections of the inhabitants of the Republic;

17 Malcolm Hacksley, ‘An Oppositional Publisher under a Repressive Regime: David Philip’s role in the struggle for books,’ Paper presented at ‘A World Elsewhere’ conference (Cape Town, 2007), p. 5.

18 Geoffrey Cronjé et al, ‘Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publications’ (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1957), p. 1.

- Is prejudicial to the safety of the State, the general welfare or the peace and good order;
- Discloses information relating to certain judicial proceedings.

If a publication contravened any of these provisions, it could be banned; the knock-on effects would penalise the publisher (for printing and publishing the material), booksellers and librarians (for distributing, displaying, exhibiting or selling the material), and book-buyers (for possessing undesirable and banned material). However, exceptions could be made for scholarly publications, as they could be considered highly specialised technical, scientific or professional publications for a specific readership, not for general distribution.

This legislation was amended a decade later, with the Publications Act (No. 42 of 1974). The Publications Control Board was replaced with the Directorate of Publications. The categories that made up an “undesirable” publication were expanded, but the concepts of artistic or literary merit, total impact, and the author’s motive were also introduced as mitigating factors. Another mitigating factor that was introduced was the use of a book for academic purposes. The right to appeal against a banning was also extended. This legislation remained in force until the transitional era, when sections of the Act were repealed due to the Abolition of Restrictions on Free Political Activity Act, No. 208 of 1993.

In addition to the censorship laws dealing directly with publications, a host of other apartheid-era legislation could also affect the distribution of a book or the publication of an author. Essery quotes Sparks as noting that “there were 120 pieces of legislation that one way or another restricted what could be published on pain of prosecution.”¹⁹ Oppositional publisher David Philip remarked on the implications of this huge body of legislation: “If one were to actually read and take seriously the details of their legislation for instance on censorship and banned people, and the penalties for infringements, one would end up publishing nothing.”²⁰ With the increasing role of censorship legislation, and the wide powers of the Publications Control Board, censorship – and the threat thereof – was a real part of the context for any publisher in South Africa. The result was a huge rise in the number of banned books, estimated to have

19 Isabel Essery, ‘The impact of politics on indigenous independent publishers from 1970 to 2004 illustrated by a case study of David Philip Publishers’ (MA thesis, Oxford Brookes University, UK, 2005), p. 23.

20 David Philip, ‘Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,’ in *Book Publishing in South Africa for the 1990s. Proceedings of a Symposium Held in the South African Library, Cape Town, 22–25 November, 1989* (Cape Town: National Library of South Africa, 1991), p. 14.

grown from 100 titles in 1948 to around 18 000 in 1971.²¹ Censorship can fulfil various roles in a repressive society, especially as regards the control of knowledge production, and has varying effects:

First, censorship is seen as an overtly political act whose tactics are linked to the perceived legitimacy and security of the State. Second, the very need for censorship is a tribute to the power and importance of rational thought and the written and printed word. Third, it is a clear contradiction of universally held concepts of the purpose of a university and, in fact, constitutes a form of institutional violence against them. Fourth, cut off from a body of published work to varying degrees, academics have left the country, resorted to privatism, or acquiesced in the system and indulged in self-censorship. Fifth, censorship has contributed to a number of schisms. Within universities it has created a divisiveness based on actual or desired responses by different groups, but more importantly, it has opened up a divide between universities and the communities which surround them, diminishing their social relevance.²²

Analysts have noted that the two main targets of censorship were obscene and political publications, although the scholarly literature on South African censorship tends to focus on the political factors.²³ They also note the unsophisticated approach to banning, especially in the decade between 1963 and 1974, when “the authorities appeared to select targets on the basis of title keywords such as ‘black,’ ‘socialism,’ and ‘revolt.’”²⁴ However, censorship was not always, and not only, overtly applied in the form of banning books. Rather, as Merrett points out, the authorities created a pervasive atmosphere of repression, while explicitly stating their support for academic freedom – two mutually exclusive categories:

South African censorship has had both its blatant and its subtle characteristics. The law has been used extensively to suppress dissenting opinion,

21 M-L. Suttie, ‘The formative years of the University of South Africa Library, 1946 to 1976,’ *Mousaion*, 23(1) (2005), p. 112.

22 C. Merrett, *State Censorship and the Academic Process in South Africa*, Occasional Paper 192 (University of Illinois, 1991), pp. 11–12.

23 André du Toit, ‘Facing up to the future: Some personal reflections on the predicament of Afrikaner intellectuals,’ *Social Dynamics*, 7(2) (1981), pp. 1–27; W.A. Hachten and C.A. Giffard, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

24 Quoted in Merrett, *State Censorship*, p. 7.

and in the eyes of some this gave the system legitimacy. At the other extreme was the use of fear to engender silence and complicity, a fear derivative of detention, torture, long prison terms and the weapon of the freelance right-wing agent. A more subtle tactic was what Marcuse calls 'repressive tolerance.' A certain level of dissenting discourse was permitted, enough to encourage an image of a reasonably liberal society, while the influential channels of communication were denied.²⁵

This concept of 'repressive tolerance' will be an important one for the university presses, as we will see. The political and legislative segregation of the country's population groups affected all spheres of society – political, of course, but also cultural, economic, intellectual and social. Thus, while the local production of knowledge was promoted, it also became more inward-looking and isolated. Such trends and stimuli also affected publishing at the country's intellectual institutions, the universities, until the end of the apartheid era.

The Development of Academic Culture

The origins of South Africa's university presses lie in the origins and development of the country's universities themselves. Moreover, as university presses are an integral part of the academy, any changes in the higher education sector could be expected to impact on the role and functions of the university presses.

At much the same time as the first indigenous publishing houses were beginning work in South Africa, and print technology was slowly filtering through the country, higher education was also introduced during the nineteenth century, with the South African College (now the University of Cape Town) being founded in 1829. In keeping with the country's colonial status, the first universities began life as colleges which initially offered secondary education, and then examinations through boards in London. The University of the Cape of Good Hope was founded in 1873 to conduct examinations and award degrees. This institution was a colonial creation, in that it was an examining body only, reliant on universities in the imperial metropole – London – for all other aspects of university education. The explicit model for this university was that of the University of London, which had become a "popular model for export" due to it being fairly cheap to run and, unlike Oxford and Cambridge at

25 C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip and University of Natal Press, 1994), p. 7.

the time, religiously neutral as well.²⁶ The University of the Cape of Good Hope later became the University of South Africa (Unisa), with other universities attached to it in a federated structure. In 1916, the Universities Act established the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch as autonomous institutions, which could conduct their own examinations. The University College of Fort Hare was founded in the same year, in a move to provide separate education for African students.

The origins of the University of the Witwatersrand may be traced to the South African School of Mines, which was established in Kimberley in 1896 and transferred to Johannesburg as the Transvaal Technical Institute in 1904. A struggle ensued between the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups for control of higher education in the Johannesburg-Pretoria region. The result was two separate universities: the College in Johannesburg became the University of the Witwatersrand in 1922. The University of Pretoria emerged out of this same tussle for university status, evolving from the Transvaal University College which had been established in 1908. It achieved full university status in 1930.

The academic culture at the local universities was thus initially coloured by colonial ties with England, and by academics who had studied in the imperial metropole. These early institutions were set up explicitly along the lines of their British counterparts by the authorities, and were governed by the colonial-era Higher Education Act (1823). Some were intended to support a policy of Anglicisation, and thus had a political and cultural purpose as well as a scholarly one. Perhaps this is most clearly evident in the establishment of the Rhodes University College in Grahamstown in 1904, which was named after one of the great imperialists, Cecil John Rhodes. But it also had implications for the other universities, and especially the growing Afrikaner nationalism at certain institutions. Viljoen notes that “it is ironical (sic) that most Afrikaner universities started as English-medium institutions modelled on the British pattern, even when they were founded and maintained from the Afrikaner community.”²⁷

The expansion of local educational institutions, as in other British colonies, was considered a source of self-satisfaction and pride for the ‘new’ nation.²⁸ In the inter-war period, academics sought to carve out a specifically South

26 M. Boucher, *Spes in Arduis: A history of the University of South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa, 1973), p. 22.

27 G. Viljoen, ‘The Afrikaans universities and particularism,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 176.

28 Saul Dubow, Saul, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, sensibility and white South Africa 1820–2000* (Oxford: OUP and Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006).

African niche for themselves, excelling in fields as diverse as linguistics, palaeontology, and tropical medicine. The universities were greatly affected by World War II in terms of resources, but numbers of staff and students continued to grow steadily nonetheless. After the war, “[q]uestions of South Africa’s status as a nation-state were powerfully to the fore.”²⁹ Science came to be portrayed as a universal(ist) project, and there was increasing professionalisation in the expanding tertiary system, which was beginning to build its own research capacity. Moreover, while “[s]cientific research had long been dominated by an anglophone elite who maintained strong imperial connections,”³⁰ after the war increasing emphasis was given to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and to the promotion of this language. Another effect of World War II was to reduce opportunities for local students, especially black students, to study abroad, and so applications to the universities from such groups of students rose. Murray cites the numbers of black students at Wits, for instance, as rising from four before the war, to 87 in 1945.³¹

The number of higher education institutions experienced a boost after World War II, and in particular after the Nationalist government came to power and restructured higher education. With the imposition of apartheid policies on the higher education system from the 1950s, there were great changes to the higher education sector at this time. For a start, the student body was segregated along racial lines. Once the Bantu Education Act (1953) and Universities Act (1955) were enacted, separate institutions were mandated for the various population groups.³² Badat writes of the intentions of this policy:

African education was to reflect the dominance of the ideology of white rule and superiority. Moreover, in accordance with the requirements of the ‘separate development’ programme, higher education for blacks was to be planned in conjunction with ‘development’ programmes for bantustans and placed under the direct control of the Department of Native Affairs.³³

29 Ibid., p. 206.

30 Ibid., p. 248.

31 B. Murray, *Wits: The early years* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1982), p. 298.

32 The use of the racial classifications contained in the terms ‘white,’ ‘black,’ ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’ is unavoidable, given their usage in the apartheid era. Terms that were in current use during an earlier period, such as ‘native’ and ‘Bantu,’ are also used when appropriate in their historical context. None of these terms is intended in any derogatory or exclusionary sense, and an attempt is made wherever possible to contextualise their use.

33 S. Badat, *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid: From SASO to SANSCO, 1968–1990* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1999), p. 50.

As a result of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, various new universities were established, along racial or ethnic lines. As a result, South Africa's universities can be categorised into three main groups: English-medium, Afrikaans-medium, and black institutions. The new black or non-white universities included the University Colleges of the North, Zululand, Western Cape and Durban-Westville. Fort Hare, which had been established as early as 1916, also became a 'bantustan' or 'bush' university in the Ciskei, and was restricted to Xhosa-speaking Africans. The University of Fort Hare, however, did not see itself in the same light as the other historically black universities, and it is interesting to note that its Press began publishing the year following the imposition of the new Act, in 1960.

The universities reserved for whites were also affected by changes. Following a commission of enquiry headed by Dr Edgar Brookes, the federal structure of Unisa was broken up, with the constituent parts being granted full university status. At this time, as a result, the Natal University College became the University of Natal, and other universities also gained autonomy, including Rhodes, the Orange Free State and Potchefstroom. At the same time, more universities were also established to support the Afrikaans-speaking community, specifically Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg and the University of Port Elizabeth. Commentators note that these – both the black and Afrikaans universities – were not established primarily as research institutions; rather, they were “instrumental institutions in the sense of having been set up to train black people who would be useful to the apartheid state, and political in the sense that their existence played a role in the maintenance of the overall apartheid socio-political agenda.”³⁴ Moreover, there was strict control of the new institutions, as the “bantustan universities were appendages of the central state which appointed their governing bodies, dictated their academic standards and prescribed the curriculum and ensured that government-supporting Afrikaners dominated administrative and academic positions.”³⁵ Unisa's role was unique, in that it was designated a distance education institution, operating largely through correspondence, and it was allowed to admit both black and white students. It was also intended to be a bilingual institution, offering tuition in both English and Afrikaans.

With the Extension of University Education Act, the entire higher education structure was thus differentiated along racial and linguistic lines. Thus, even though South Africa was formally no longer a British colony, a form of

34 Ian Bunting, 'The higher education landscape under apartheid,' in N. Cloete et al. (eds), *Transformation in Higher Education* (Cape Town: CHET and HSRC Press, 2002), p. 74.

35 John Davies, 'The State and the South African University System under Apartheid,' *Comparative Education*, 32(3) (1996), p. 322.

“intellectual colonisation” remained.³⁶ As racially focused policies were imposed on the universities, and institutional autonomy appeared threatened, debates around the concept of academic freedom grew, but the universities were largely compliant with state policies. With the universities reliant on the state for a considerable proportion of their funding, and with the national Ministry of Education keeping a close eye on appointments and policies, the stage was set for a spectrum of responses. The academic boycott of the 1980s and international isolation limited the scope for local scholars further. Academia became increasingly inward-looking, cautious of giving offence, and, some have argued, mediocre. But this was not the only response: opposition grew at the same time.

Academic Responses to Apartheid

In addition to legislative restrictions, within institutions there was control of dissent. For a start, there was far-reaching control of the appointment of academics and the administration of the universities. At all the black universities, for instance, state strategy was to “appoint their own men, some of them recent graduates, invariably from the Afrikaans-medium universities, and promote them rapidly.”³⁷ A number of universities came under Broederbond control, directly supporting the Nationalist government. And pressure was also brought to bear to prevent the appointment of certain academics. For instance, at UCT in 1968, the government intervened to prevent the appointment of Archie Mafeje in the Department of Social Anthropology. He was to leave the country as a result. A number of black academics were thereafter appointed on temporary contracts to avoid such government intervention.

Apart from such politically motivated repression, there was also a form of direct institutional repression, in which universities could apply punitive measures, or the threat thereof, to prevent academics from stepping out of line. While a certain measure of dissent may have been tolerated, any direct challenge to the institution or the government would not have been permitted. The political and legal sanctions against academics and against publishers, then, were both overt and covert.

36 Du Toit, quoted in Y. Taylor and R. Taylor, ‘Academic freedom and racial injustice: South Africa’s former “open universities,”’ *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 24(6) (2010), p. 899.

37 M.M. Balintulo, ‘The black universities in South Africa,’ in J. Rex (ed.), *Apartheid and Social Research* (Paris: UNESCO, 1981), p. 150.

Because of the imposition of policies of separate development on the universities, academics and students came into conflict with the state. But, as Moodie notes, “the extent, nature, and origins of the conflict varied immensely between the three main university groups.”³⁸ The English-medium universities are traditionally seen as liberal in ideology – these are the so-called ‘open’ universities of Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes and the Witwatersrand. The designation of ‘open’ implied that these universities’ admission criteria were intended to be purely academic, and applied without regard to considerations of race, colour or creed.³⁹ Dr T.B. Davie, the Vice-Chancellor of UCT, famously declared that there are “four essential freedoms” for a university: “to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study.”⁴⁰ This has become a classic definition of academic freedom in the South African context.

The open universities had a complicated relationship with the government and with society, summed up in Wits’s compromise of “academic non-segregation and social segregation.”⁴¹ The relationship of these universities and the apartheid government is well summarised by Bunting:

...the four universities accepted that they were public institutions and that they were, as a consequence, entitled to government funding. However, they argued that by their very nature as universities, they were not servants of the state and thus that they would not accept that their functions could be limited to those of serving the needs and implementing the policies of the government of the day. Indeed they believed that their commitment to the universal values of academic freedom made it impossible for them to act as the servants of the apartheid state. From time to time, therefore, they objected strongly to the policies and actions of the apartheid government, even while accepting substantial subsidy funding from that government.⁴²

Moreover, as the struggle against apartheid intensified, and student activism in particular grew much stronger after the Soweto Riots of 1976, the open universities were increasingly affected by external factors, too: the introduction of

38 Graeme Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities in South Africa: 1948–1990,’ *Higher Education*, 27 (1994), p. 7.

39 B. Murray, *Wits: The ‘open’ years* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), p. xi.

40 Quoted in Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities,’ p. 9.

41 Murray, *Wits: The ‘open’ years*, p. xi.

42 Bunting, ‘The higher education landscape,’ p. 70.

the academic boycott and resulting isolation of South African academics. Increased activism also led to the rise of “anti-government” research institutes at certain of the universities.⁴³ These research institutes and centres, as will be seen when we examine their publishing records, appear to have operated with a great deal more autonomy than the usual departments and faculties within the universities. They were run by independent-minded researchers – often mavericks who did not fit well into the strictures of a department – and they reflected the more radical ideologies of their founders and directors in their research themes and publications. We can only speculate as to why the research institutes were granted so much institutional autonomy. Perhaps because of independent funding sources or sponsorships? Perhaps to promote a reasonably liberal or at least tolerant image for the university? The factors are unclear, and further research into this area would be of great interest.

While the ‘open’ universities are often depicted as liberal, even oppositional, in outlook during the apartheid years, commentators such as Mahmood Mamdani have commented that the historically white English-medium universities “were never major agents for social and political change in South Africa, despite the anti-apartheid stance they had adopted.”⁴⁴ Arguing that the white English-speaking universities are essentially conservative institutions, Margo agrees that they “always have been, and continue to be, deeply involved in the white power structure of this country.”⁴⁵ Similarly, Dubow argues that the “English-speaking establishment and its institutions were in reality often highly conservative during the apartheid era,” although later they became “indelibly associated with ‘liberalism.’”⁴⁶ Indeed, anti-apartheid academics such as Richard Turner criticised their “pose of virtuous academic neutrality,” which he argued enabled them to continue to serve “the existing interest structure.”⁴⁷ He went on to argue that “[t]he myth of neutrality is further undermined if one considers the nature of ‘White’ academic culture – for it is a culture dominated by a Eurocentrism, it is a culture that serves to promote and reproduce Western values.” As a result, black academics and students had to “integrate themselves into this value system – if they do not they are unlikely to succeed.”⁴⁸ These structural impediments resulted in low numbers of black

43 Johan Mouton et al., *Science in Africa at the Dawn of the 21st Century. Country Report: South Africa* (Paris: IRD and Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2001), p. 45.

44 Mamdani quoted in Bunting, ‘The higher education landscape,’ p. 73.

45 Margo quoted in Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities,’ p. 33.

46 Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*, p. 10.

47 Turner quoted in Rupert Taylor, ‘The narrow ground: Critical intellectual work on South Africa under apartheid,’ *Critical Arts*, 5 (4) (1991), p. 34.

48 Taylor, ‘The narrow ground,’ pp. 34–35.

academics at even the open universities; in the 1980s, the numbers of black academics rose to just 7% of the Wits academic staff.

In contrast to the clashes at the open universities, among the Afrikaans-medium universities there was greater acceptance of the Afrikaner nationalist government and its policies, or what has been termed a “convergence of interests,” although this cannot be interpreted as across-the-board support.⁴⁹ These universities include Pretoria, Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom, Port Elizabeth, (Orange) Free State, and Rand Afrikaans University (now known as the University of Johannesburg). Various commentators in the literature have pointed out that “[o]pposition, let alone conflict, was weakest among the Afrikaans-medium universities.”⁵⁰ The reasons given are not always the same, although they tend to agree on the aspects of a “struggle for survival in the face of rampant British cultural imperialism,”⁵¹ as well as “immense social and peer-group pressures to ensure public conformity and private discretion in the interests of *volk* solidarity.”⁵² There were close ties between the National Party and many Afrikaner academics, and they were to support Afrikaner nationalism and, by extension, apartheid, by elaborating its ideological underpinnings.

Some suggest that the relationship went further than ideological compliance, to the extent of very close political ties. Mouton et al. note, for instance, that “[m]ost of the Afrikaans-medium universities were staffed by predominantly sympathetic and conservative supporters of government policy. Most of the rectors of these universities (as well as the ‘bush’ colleges) and members of councils, were either card-carrying members of the NP [National Party] or members of the secret Broederbond (‘Brotherhood’) organisation which was later exposed as a powerful, nationalist body that promoted Afrikaner ideology in all spheres of society.”⁵³ The rector of Rand Afrikaans University was widely believed to be a member of the Broederbond, and various NP ministers had at one time been academics themselves, including H.F. Verwoerd (a sociologist). Another example is the University of Pretoria sociologist Geoffrey Cronjé – mentioned previously in relation to censorship legislation – who has been described as a “seminal contributor to the theory of apartheid.”⁵⁴

This was not the only subject position open to academics at the Afrikaner universities, and opposition may also be found among these ranks. For instance,

49 Davies, ‘The State and the South African University System,’ p. 322.

50 Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities,’ p. 7.

51 Davies, ‘The State and the South African University System,’ p. 323.

52 Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities,’ p. 7.

53 Mouton et al., *Science in Africa*, p. 44.

54 J.M. Coetzee, ‘The mind of apartheid: Geoffrey Cronjé (1907–),’ *Social Dynamics*, 17(1) (1991), p. 1.

the Groep van 13 ('Group of 13') protested against the loss of the Coloured vote as early as the 1950s. As time went on, the rift between the camps of so-called *verligte* (enlightened) and *verkrampte* (conservative) Afrikaners would widen, and more intellectual responses would open up, along the entire continuum.

These, then, were the positions into which the 'open' and 'Afrikaner' universities would usually fall. But the University of South Africa (Unisa), the official distance education institution, does not fall easily into one of the three categories, and has as a result been classified in a number of different ways, from the extreme of Moodie describing it as "the only genuinely bilingual and multi-racial university" to Dick's suggestion that "Unisa, like many other Afrikaans universities at that time, was publicly characterised as a *volksuniversiteit* ('people's university') by government officials."⁵⁵ Bunting, too, depicts the unique position of Unisa by aligning it with the Afrikaans universities:

...the University of South Africa was more akin to historically white Afrikaans-medium than historically white English-medium universities. When conflicts arose within the university system, it tended to support the Afrikaans rather than the English universities and so became the seventh member of this Afrikaans bloc. Its intellectual agenda was also typical of that of an historically white Afrikaans-medium university. It had a very large, well-qualified academic staff complement, but engaged in little or no research and maintained few international linkages.⁵⁶

According to Suttie, this ambiguity around Unisa's role may have been deliberate, at least in part:

It was convenient for the apartheid state and the university managers to parade Unisa as a 'nonracial' national university. This ambivalent identity became a feature of Unisa's role in higher education, able to juggle compliance with a greater openness – conforming to the spirit of the law without having to adhere to its letter. It diversified its staff, allowing some individualised dissent, but discouraged views or actions that were likely to implicate the institution in any direct challenge to government policy.⁵⁷

55 Moodie, 'The state and the liberal universities,' p. 4; Archie L. Dick, 'Scholarship, Identity and Lies: The political life of H.J. de Vleeschauwer, 1940–1955,' *Kleio*, 34 (2002), p. 23.

56 Bunting, 'The higher education landscape,' p. 80.

57 Suttie, 'The formative years,' pp. 114–115.

In the early 1960s, as politics became an increasingly important factor, Unisa became involved in the nationalist imperative to support Afrikaans students, with additional resources and the eventual establishment of the University of Port Elizabeth and Rand Afrikaans University. But, Suttie cautions, “it is too simplistic to view the relationship between Unisa and the National Party government in purely ideological terms.”⁵⁸ Moreover, Unisa changed its political stance to some extent over the years:

As South Africa's political landscape changed in the wake of student activism, African trade unionism and strike action, as well as international opposition to apartheid, so Unisa tried in the era of Theo van Wijk after 1972 to construct itself as an ‘open university.’ The appointment of van Wijk itself represented a setback to Broederbond control of the university when the professor of librarianship and head of the department, S.I. Malan, lost the Senate vote in favour of Van Wijk. Unisa was to be open, in the sense of providing higher education to black and white, but still conceived in the narrow framework of Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Van Wijk preached open access to university education, but within the boundaries of segregation. Separate classes for black and white students were maintained, lecturing staff were all white and predominantly Afrikaans speaking. Moreover, meetings were conducted in Afrikaans and minutes were also recorded in Afrikaans.⁵⁹

It is thus not straightforward to label Unisa an Afrikaans university, nor an open university, as its competing purposes create a highly ambiguous and complex picture. On the whole, though, the university complied with apartheid policies: “[d]espite Van Wijk’s attempts to construe the university in apolitical terms, its projects betrayed its pro-government credentials. The library, no less than the rest of the institution, proved amenable to apartheid policy and built a formidable repository of archives, books and journals within the political culture of the ruling party. In line with such compliance, the library worked within the parameters of apartheid censorship.”⁶⁰

The third category of higher education institution in South Africa is the ‘black’ or ‘non-white’ university. The earliest of these was Fort Hare, which was later supplemented by specially developed ethnically separate universities: Durban-Westville (for Indians), Western Cape (for Coloureds), and for black

58 Ibid., p. 106.

59 Ibid., pp. 111–112.

60 Ibid., p. 112.

students, the University of Zululand, University of the North, Medunsa University (for medical training) and Vista University (for correspondence education). In particular, the University of Fort Hare, like Unisa, is a complicated case. It played an important role in creating a class of black intellectuals, but it was also increasingly constrained by legislation intended to restrict the scope for black people, both socially and in terms of employment. It later played a significant role, through an increasingly politically aware and activist student cohort, in protesting various apartheid policies. The so-called 'bantustan' or 'bush' universities were rigidly controlled by the government, but to varying extents, they too played a role in the struggle against apartheid. To a large extent, these institutions fall outside the scope of this study, simply because their constrained environment prevented them from participating in scholarly publishing to any great degree.

But this lack of publishing was not unique to the black universities. Apart from setting the universities against the government, at least on occasion, the imposition of apartheid policies had long-term and chilling effects on the role and practices of the universities, especially in the area of research. Critical work declined at South African universities in the 1960s and 1970s, due to factors as diverse as the academic boycott, the brain drain towards more developed and affluent societies, and political restrictions, but there were also shifts in ideological outlook and in academic fashion. For instance, in the discipline of History, a trend may be discerned over the years: "there has however, since the early 1970s been a rise in work that has drawn on historical materialism and class analysis. The body of liberal historiography and liberal research on race and ethnic attitudes has come to be supplanted (sic) by this rival school of studies which has primarily shown how apartheid is a function of capitalism."⁶¹ Taylor also links such shifts in ideology and in research patterns to "[t]he growth of publishing outlets offered through Ravan Press and David Philip, in South Africa." Thus, "[t]he constraints on research were real enough, but research still took place, even if on occasion it had to be published abroad" or by the independent oppositional publishers.⁶²

Resistance grew more intense and more vocal over time, and in particular in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. This period has been characterised as a time of "increasing polarisation and the deepening of existing divides."⁶³ Some of these divides included the following: "Divisions between Afrikaans and English academics and between advantaged and disadvantaged scholars

61 Taylor, 'The narrow ground,' p. 38.

62 Moodie, 'The state and the liberal universities,' p. 20.

63 Mouton et al., *Science in Africa*, p. 34.

increased. Ideological polarisation between paradigms (Gramscians, Althusserians, functionalists and so on) became even more prominent in the early eighties.”⁶⁴ At the same time, the divisions between pro-apartheid and anti-apartheid academics grew, as the latter group in particular became more vocal in their critique of the government and its policies. Mouton et al. single out science councils, such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), as being “perceived to be working in collusion with the government”; as a result, they argue, they were dismissed as being “ideologically tainted.”⁶⁵ This situation would only start to normalise during the transitional period of the 1990s.

Realistically, then, “[i]t must probably be accepted that, in the short-run at least, none of the universities were or could be institutions of fundamental change in any society.”⁶⁶ Yet, perceptions remain of the dominant attitudes and roles played by the universities during the apartheid years. This tension, between perception and reality, will be seen to emerge once again when we examine the scholarly publishing records of these institutions in later chapters, in the form of the publishing output of their university presses. To what extent can we say that the presses supported academic freedom, then?

Academic Freedom

One of the most significant perceptions of South African scholarly publishing is that the university presses were seen as oppositional publishers. This is a common expectation of university presses:

For well over a century, university presses released titles that challenged traditional thinking in the United States; prodded citizens and political leaders to evaluate economic, social, and ecological issues confronting the nation; influenced legislation in Washington and in numerous state capitals; and sparked intense debates in the marketplace of ideas. Clearly, university presses became a critically important conduit within and outside the academy for ideas, opinions, and, at times, controversies.⁶⁷

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid. p. 34.

66 Budlender, quoted in Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities,’ p. 34.

67 A.N. Greco, ‘The General Reader Market for University Press Books in the United States, 1990–9, with projections for the years 2000 through 2004,’ *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 32(2) (2001).

Similarly, Harrison argues that “general interest intermediaries, including universities and scholarly presses, have a responsibility to expose their audience to materials, topics and positions that they would not have chosen in advance.”⁶⁸ Universities and their presses should thus serve as a platform for a wide spectrum of intellectual stances.

In other words, university press publishing has traditionally been closely associated with academic freedom and the role of the public intellectual. For some, this is a key role: to provoke debate, to create platforms for dissenting voices and views, and to represent a critical and even controversial stance. Ebewo, for instance, states that “[a] publishing house within the university community exemplifies autonomy and academic freedom.”⁶⁹ Unfortunately, this perception and indeed principle has not always been lived out in practice, especially in repressive societies. For instance, in a highly stratified and regulated society, such as apartheid South Africa was, these processes may be complicated and politicised. In the USA, during the segregation period, Fidler has described a repressive environment having an effect on research and publication. He goes on to praise “several university presses in the South [which] published works on controversial subjects, even books with passages exploring public views and constitutional issues in relation to racial integration.”⁷⁰

At the same time, any university press is likely to reflect the ideological norms of its institution and of the academics who undertake peer review and selection functions. While few university presses openly support a particular political outlook, nonetheless their publishing decisions and lists are coloured by certain ideological or political orientations. For example, a study of Harvard University Press’s publishing list shows that it has tended to tilt “heavily left” especially in recent years.⁷¹ A similar study of Yale University Press found a similar outlook: “these books pass along the progressive viewpoint almost exclusively, with only a few that could be considered theme-neutral or classically liberal, and none that can be termed conservative-oriented.”⁷² These studies demonstrate that

68 C. Harrison, ‘Peer review, politics and pluralism,’ *Environmental Science and Policy*, 7 (2004), pp. 357–368.

69 Patrick Ebewo, ‘The University Press and Scholarly Publishing in South Africa’ in S. Ngobeni (ed.), *Scholarly Publishing in Africa: Opportunities and impediments* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2010), p. 28.

70 William P. Fidler, ‘Academic Freedom in the South Today,’ *AAUP Bulletin*, 51(5) (1965), p. 417.

71 David Gordon and Per Nilsson, ‘The Ideological Profile of Harvard University Press: Categorizing 494 Books Published 2000–2010,’ *Econ Journal Watch*, 8(1) (2011), p. 81.

72 Parrott, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 92.

the publishing lists of such university presses are considerably more liberal in orientation than the average in the USA.

In addition to ideological orientation, university presses are also sometimes said to lie “between the cathedral and the market”⁷³ or between “God and Mammon”⁷⁴ in terms of their orientation because of the balancing act they perform in serving both research needs and profit motivations. But university presses also occupy a specific space in the societies they serve, forming part of an intellectual and higher education environment that is for the most part funded by governments, as well as disseminating values and culture through the publications they produce. They are, too, an important component in the knowledge economy and especially in the processes of knowledge generation and certification. These presses could thus be said to occupy a space balancing the economy, state and academy. These competing pressures have been theorised in various contexts as the competing forces or narratives of ideological, market and symbolic control.⁷⁵

The role of a university in society is closely linked to questions of knowledge production and of academic freedom. The concept of academic freedom arose from the nineteenth-century German practice of *Lehrfreiheit*, which gave academics lifetime appointments to pursue teaching and research as long as they avoided “religious heterodoxy and political subversion.” Under this system, as Axelrod points out, “scholars thus secured considerable autonomy, but surviving as they did at ‘the pleasure of the state,’ their freedom was clearly conditional.”⁷⁶ Altbach makes the important point that differing definitions of academic freedom exist, as “nowhere has academic freedom been fully delineated, and nowhere does it have the force of law.”⁷⁷ There is thus no universally accepted definition or understanding of academic freedom. Many consider academic freedom to relate to the autonomy of the university and its academics, in that they should be free to conduct research and to teach without undue political (or other) interference. Edward Shils argues that the concept of academic

73 Chakava, ‘An African Commercial and Textbook Publisher.’

74 Marsh Jeanneret, *God and Mammon: Universities as Publishers* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 2002).

75 For instance Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The specificity of the scientific field and the social conditions of the progress of reason,’ *Social Science Information*, 14 (6) (1975/6), pp. 19–47; Gisele Sapiro, ‘The literary field between the state and the market,’ *Poetics*, 31 (2003), pp. 441–464; and others.

76 P. Axelrod, ‘The Ironies of Academic Freedom’ in K. Petersen and A.C. Hutchinson (eds), *Interpreting Censorship in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 352.

77 Philip Altbach, ‘Academic freedom: International realities and challenges,’ *Higher Education*, 41(1/2) (2001), p. 207.

freedom should be extended to the political freedom of academics as individuals, which includes “political activities outside the university.”⁷⁸ Thus, an extreme view of academic freedom is the belief that an individual academic should be able to hold *any* views, orthodox or not, without censure or penalty, thus allowing for critical enquiry.⁷⁹

The literature on academic freedom in South Africa indicates that there is little consensus on the definition of the term, nor on how it has been applied in practice at the various universities. The most used definition is T.B. Davie’s classic formulation of academic freedom in terms of the “four freedoms,” mentioned earlier. Another useful definition is that of Sir Edward Boyle, who repeated the formulation used in the Robbins Report when presenting the 1966 Richard Feetham Memorial Lecture at Wits University:

For the individual teacher academic freedom means the absence of discriminatory treatment on grounds of race, sex, religion or politics, and the right to teach according to his own conception of fact and truth rather than according to any predetermined orthodoxy. It involves freedom to publish and subject to the proper performance of allotted duties, freedom to pursue whatever personal studies are congenial.⁸⁰

The inclusion of the freedom to publish in such a definition is unusual, but this is otherwise a restatement of the so-called ‘liberal’ view of academic freedom. These definitions, which fall on the liberal side of the political spectrum, are commonly found in the international literature. But there are also competing definitions of academic freedom from the apartheid period. Marcum, for instance, notes that “Afrikaner academics have traditionally seen the issue of academic freedom from a narrower perspective. To them it has meant the freedom to develop and safeguard a group’s language and culture within its own academies. Thus they view academic freedom principally in collective, ethno-cultural rather than individual terms and are inclined to accept the need for conformity to certain *volk* values.”⁸¹ This notion of collective or ‘republican’

78 Quoted in Antoon De Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide, 1945 to 1990* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 5.

79 C.R.M. Dlamini, ‘University Autonomy and Academic Freedom in South Africa’ (Unpublished LLD Thesis, Unisa, South Africa, 1996), p. iii.

80 Quoted in G.R. Bozzoli, *Academic freedom in South Africa: The open universities in South Africa and academic freedom 1957–1974* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Juta, 1974), pp. 431–432.

81 John A. Marcum, *Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa* (California: University of California Press, 1981), p. 57.

academic freedom contrasts with the individualist ethos of the liberal definition.

Academic freedom may be threatened by the state, by the academy itself, or by civil society. While, in the post-apartheid period, the focus falls on threats to academic freedom from forces such as managerialism, commercialism, quotas and the shifting mandates of universities, in the apartheid period the aggressor was usually identified more simply with the state, with academics as victims. In other words, where threats are now seen more as internal factors, they used to be conceived of as external pressures: “Even those who do not simplistically confuse academic freedom with individual freedom of speech still tend to conceive it in essentially similar terms as a right to protection from external interference.”⁸²

Even during the most repressive days of apartheid, lip service was paid to the ideal of academic freedom. Some scholars argue that the apartheid state “provided the basis for considerable autonomy and freedom, so long as the university did not jeopardize this freedom by engaging in ‘political ideology and public action’ that would bring it into conflict with society or the state” (quoted in Higgins, 2000: 8). But this autonomy was not without limitations. To some extent, academic freedom was enshrined in the acts establishing the universities themselves, as they contained what was known as a ‘conscience clause,’ which protected staff and students from discrimination on the basis of their beliefs and opinions.⁸³ This clause was primarily intended to protect religious views, not political ones. However, as Greyling notes, there was no such clause in the acts establishing the black universities, which effectively “denied [them] academic freedom and undermined the status of the colleges as institutions of higher learning.”⁸⁴ Another university that deliberately removed the conscience clause from its charter was Potchefstroom University, which asserted – even in its official name, the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PUCHE) – that all academics should uphold “the Christian historical character of the university.”⁸⁵ The University of the Orange Free State

82 André du Toit, ‘From autonomy to accountability: Academic freedom under threat in South Africa?’, *Social Dynamics*, 26(1) (2000), p. 97.

83 Elaine Botha, ‘Christian Scholarship for Reconciliation? A comparative analysis of two historical models of faith-full scholarship: The Free University of Amsterdam and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1975–1995’ in William E. Van Vugt and G. Daan Cloete (eds), *Race, Ethnicity and Reconciliation in South Africa: A Multicultural Comparative Dialogue* (London: Lexington Books, 2000), p. 130.

84 Sean Greyling, ‘Rhodes University during the Segregation and Apartheid Eras, 1933 to 1990’ (MA dissertation, Rhodes University, South Africa, 2007), p. 58.

85 Ostrowick, John, ‘Christian National Education’ (University of Cape Town, 1993), p. 5. Available online: <<http://www.ostrowick.co.za/books/CNE/ANC%20on%20CNE.pdf>>.

later also attempted to remove the conscience clause from its charter, but was unsuccessful.

Academic freedom itself was not directly limited by legislation, but the effect of several other laws along with a repressive atmosphere combined to stifle such freedom. These laws included the Suppression of Terrorism Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the Defence Act, in terms of which people who were seen to be provoking or inciting political action could be banned. "Inciting political action" was rather widely interpreted, and could be linked to the content of an academic's lecturing or publications. In addition, the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 actively operated to constrict academic freedom. As Merrett notes, the Act segregated universities, and "also empowered the rectors of the five University Colleges to control student publications and relations with the press. Staff were forbidden to comment publicly on any government department, and to engage in political activity."⁸⁶ The repressive measures enacted against universities that were seen as non-compliant included the firing and even arrest or deportation of liberal or anti-apartheid academics, a ban on staff engaging in political activity, and state appointments. During the 1960s and 1970s, especially, there were "severe restrictions on the administrative autonomy of, and academic freedom at, the black universities."⁸⁷

Thus the universities were subject to the same polarising forces encouraging a choice between acquiescence and resistance, as were other parts of society. This led to the politicisation of campuses across the country, and the growing involvement of staff and students in political activities (both for and against the government). There were also protests, although little concerted or systematic activity, against infringements on academic freedom. Academic freedom became an increasingly contested issue, along with the notion of institutional autonomy from government or political interference.

The tradition of guarding academic freedom at South African universities against such threats has a relatively long history, dating back to when "liberal social scientists at Wits challenged 'race' as a scientific concept after the 1930s."⁸⁸ Institutionally, Wits and UCT spoke out the loudest against apartheid and its limitations on their academic and institutional freedom, although there were academics and students at most of the universities who resisted to a greater or lesser extent. In 1957, in protest against the extension of apartheid policies to the universities, these two institutions published a booklet titled

86 Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 33.

87 S. Badat, *Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008), p. 72.

88 Murray, *Wits: The 'open' years*, p. 252.

The Open Universities in South Africa. This booklet set out their definition of academic freedom, and has generally been perceived as an oppositional gesture; Du Toit concedes that, “in the context of the anti-apartheid struggle from the 1950s the liberal discourse on academic freedom did have a significant oppositional function.”⁸⁹ A follow-up document, *The Open Universities in South Africa and Academic Freedom*, was produced in 1974.

An important aspect of the apartheid-era definitions of academic freedom is that they linked such freedom to institutional autonomy. With the state governing the universities through legislation, controlling their budgets through its funding, and bringing pressure to bear on various operational aspects, higher education institutions were not particularly autonomous. Indeed, the essays collected in *The Open Universities in South Africa* booklet actually avoided criticising apartheid itself, but instead focused on the government’s “unwarranted interference with university autonomy and academic freedom.”⁹⁰ As will be seen, in the absence of institutional autonomy, the selection and other publishing procedures of the university presses would also, of necessity, be constrained.

Academic freedom has also been seen as separate from institutional autonomy, however, and Andre du Toit in particular argues that we should see it in a “contextual” sense.⁹¹ The 1957 booklet argued along these lines as well:

It is appropriate, however, to remark generally that academic freedom, like other ‘great, abiding truths,’ is only ‘abiding’ in so far as each generation reinterprets and makes that truth its own. The concept of academic freedom is, like all concepts, subject to some reassessment in the light of changing needs and changing social circumstances, though the core of belief remains unchanged.⁹²

Academic Neutrality and the Role of the Individual

If academic freedom is contextualised, then the role and responsibility of the individual academic assumes greater importance. This is why it is so significant in this study to examine the individuals who managed the Publications

89 Du Toit, ‘From autonomy to accountability,’ p. 82.

90 ‘The Open Universities.’

91 Du Toit, ‘From autonomy to accountability.’

92 ‘The Open Universities.’

Committees and ran the university presses; they had a direct influence on selection decisions and publishing philosophy – on access to the university presses, in short. In the literature, a debate may be found concerning the role and responsibility of the academic – usually referred to in broader terms, as the “intellectual” – and the university. This debate is encapsulated in terms such as the “public intellectual” (à la Habermas), “traditional” and “organic intellectuals” (à la Gramsci), and “movement intellectuals,” operating within a “culture of critical discourse” (à la Gouldner). This debate is largely located within the field of sociology, and specifically in what is known as the sociology of science or of intellectuals, although it also has resonance with the field of intellectual history. It has been argued that this sub-field “should be required reading for those engaging with the discourse of intellectuals and academic freedom.”⁹³ Du Toit goes on to ask: “Can the university’s claims to academic freedom go together with a recognition that it can and must be held socially and politically accountable?” – and this is the key question framing the debate.⁹⁴

Many argue on the side of accountability, that academics have a social responsibility in addition to an intellectual one. Sanders, for instance, outlines a “theory of intellectual responsibility” in his work on the role of academics during apartheid, titled *Complicities*.⁹⁵ Such criticism of academics tends to be associated with Habermas’s ideal of the “universal intellectual,” who is seen as having a responsibility to intervene on behalf of “rights that have been violated and truths that have been suppressed.”⁹⁶ The American Association of University Professors stated in the mid-1970s that “[t]he college or university faculty member is a citizen and like other citizens, should be free to engage in political activities so far as he is able to do so consistently with his obligations as a teacher and scholar.”⁹⁷

This argument is also known as the “moralist” school of thought, and it is well summed up by Vaclav Havel, speaking in the context of repressive regimes and threats to academic freedom:

The intellectual should constantly disturb, should bear witness to the misery of the world, should be provocative by being independent, should

93 Du Toit, ‘From autonomy to accountability,’ p. 93.

94 Ibid., p. 102.

95 Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. ix.

96 Quoted in Ibid., p. 5.

97 Quoted in Pierre Hugo, ‘Academic Dissent and Apartheid in South Africa,’ *Journal of Black Studies*, 7(3) (1977), p. 256.

rebel against all hidden and open pressure and manipulations, should be the chief doubter of systems, of power and its incantations, should be a witness to their mendacity.⁹⁸

Similarly, Robert Birley has made a strong appeal for the importance of intellectual dissent in a repressive society:

It is certainly not the business of a university to become a kind of unofficial political Opposition. But this does not mean that it should ignore what happens in the world outside it. The fate of the German universities in the 1930s should be a warning to us. They believed that, as long as they preserved the right of free research and free teaching within their own walls, they did not need to concern themselves about what else was happening in their country. As a result, they did nothing to oppose the rise to power of a political party which made it quite clear that it intended to destroy the academic freedom which the universities enjoyed. I should say that a university today should be deeply concerned about the denial of justice beyond its own walls.⁹⁹

Karabel examines what makes academics choose one side or another, if they accept their “moralist” position as having a social responsibility: “A key question, then, is why some intellectuals align themselves with the forces of ‘revolution’ while others take the side of ‘continuity’ and of ‘reaction.’”¹⁰⁰ It is interesting, then, that he does not assume that social responsibility and resistance to the government are necessarily coterminous. He continues:

...those who occupy dominant positions within their respective spheres share an obvious interest in the status quo. It is thus misleading to assume, as does much of the existing literature, that intellectuals will typically adopt an oppositional stance towards the existing order; most of them have, after all, attained a relatively privileged position within it, and their well-being often depends upon the acquisition of resources controlled by political and economic elites with whom they are socially and culturally linked.¹⁰¹

98 Quoted in Jerome Karabel, ‘Towards a theory of intellectuals and politics,’ *Theory and Society*, 25 (1996), p. 205.

99 Quoted in Bozzoli, *Academic Freedom*, p. 433.

100 Karabel, ‘Towards a theory,’ p. 206.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

This assumption of privilege and comfort does not negate the possibility of opposition: Van der Berghe contends that “the optimum milieu for a creative intelligentsia is an unjust and indefensible society with a moderately and inefficiently repressive regime and an urban population living reasonably comfortably.”¹⁰² In such conditions, there was space, and even impetus, for academics to play their role as public intellectuals by resisting the state.

In contrast, however, we have the opposing position, in which some would argue that it was *not* the role of the universities to become politically involved, and that, instead, academic freedom not only required but demanded a stance of scientific objectivity and political neutrality: “The freedom to pursue political issues and to promote political causes is not part of academic freedom; it is part of other freedoms such as freedom of speech which includes the freedom to hold and impart opinions.”¹⁰³

This was the view of Theo van Wijk, Principal of Unisa in the 1970s and 1980s. He argued in favour of the university’s “independence,” and attacked those who, as he saw it, were attempting to draw Unisa into “the maelstrom of social and political movements.”¹⁰⁴ The role of the academic was, in his eyes, “non-political,” as “a university should not pronounce officially on controversial issues, largely because individual academic freedom is protected by institutional non-partisanship.”¹⁰⁵

While Moulder describes the literature on the idea of a politically neutral university as “sparse,” he has provided an overview and critique of such beliefs.¹⁰⁶ Even the open universities agreed at times with such sentiments, though they appear to contradict their otherwise oppositional stance:

The open universities are not ‘political,’ as is sometimes alleged. Indeed, taking a political stance and being committed to an ideology would violate the very nature of a university. Nevertheless, they have felt compelled to comment upon certain aspects of the society of which they form a part. They do so in the belief that universities can fulfil their proper function only in a society which respects academic freedom together with

102 Quoted in Merrett, ‘A Tale of Two Paradoxes,’ p. 57.

103 Commission of Inquiry, quoted in Du Toit, ‘From autonomy to accountability,’ p. 108.

104 Quoted in M-L. Suttie, ‘The University of South Africa Library: From the Soweto Rebellion to the beginning of the end of Apartheid, 1976–1990,’ *Mousaion*, 24(2) (2006), p. 290.

105 Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 301.

106 James Moulder, ‘University Neutrality: Some Puzzling Reflections in a South African Mirror,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 245.

other civil liberties. Academic freedom is so woven into the fabric of human freedom that it is jeopardised by infringements of human freedom.¹⁰⁷

In contrast, many argue that such neutrality is impossible. Van der Merwe and Welsh, in their important collections on South African universities during the 1970s, deliberately note that one of the “pressing issues” which they seek to examine is “the extent to which a university can or should remain ‘neutral’ on public issues and government policies.”¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Bozzoli, writing in the same collection, rejects political neutrality as an option for a university, while Budlender condemns the concept of a politically neutral university as a myth.¹⁰⁹ Botha goes on to elucidate that, “[t]he so-called apolitical character of the university becomes highly questionable when it appears that the university uncritically actively or tacitly supports a questionable political policy that sustains its own existence.”¹¹⁰

It can thus be argued that the position of academic neutrality was in fact a smokescreen for complicity with the government and its policies. This position has received sharp criticism, for supporting apartheid policies simply by doing nothing to oppose them. For instance, Richard Turner wrote in *The Eye of the Needle*: “Their [the open universities’] pose of virtuous academic neutrality in fact means that they are efficient servants of the existing interest structure.”¹¹¹ Beale supports this position, noting that “[r]ationalisations were also offered in support of a notion of science as apolitical and value-neutral, thereby freeing scientific communities of taking responsibility for the ends and consequences of their research.”¹¹² Greyling links the issue to social change: “A university is a powerful institution that has the means to change society, but refraining from doing so when justice is being denied beyond its own walls and calling it university neutrality, is in fact acquiescence.”¹¹³

107 ‘The Open Universities,’ p. 46.

108 H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. vii.

109 Bozzoli, ‘The role of the English universities,’ p. 194; Geoff Budlender, ‘The Conservative Bias of South African Universities,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 260.

110 Botha, ‘Christian Scholarship,’ p. 124.

111 Quoted in Taylor, ‘The narrow ground,’ p. 34.

112 Mary Alice Beale, ‘Apartheid and University Education, 1948–1959’ (MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1994).

113 Greyling, ‘Rhodes University,’ p. 13.

Recognising the complexity of the situation, and the scope for critique from all sides of the political spectrum, Moulder concludes that it is not clear when a South African university is being too political, and when it is not being political enough – a question that resists resolution, even today.¹¹⁴

The Role of the University Press

University presses, like universities, are closely linked to such notions of intellectual and academic freedom. If there is no freedom to conduct research in any area of study, or to write up the results of that research, unfettered by political or other constraints, then there can also be no freedom to circulate or debate the results of that research, nor to engage in open discussion of ideas and theories. Thus university presses, an integral part of the academy itself, also have an important role to play in supporting and promoting academic freedom.

The university press is a very specific form of publisher, producing very specific kinds of texts, and intricately embedded in the practices of research and dissemination at the modern university. While definitions of scholarly publishing vary, there is a surprising amount of agreement as to the purpose and functions of a university press. A representative definition of a university press, as found in the literature, is the following:

The purpose of the university press is to provide an outlet for the publication of research by faculty members of its own and other universities, and extend the instructional function of the parent institution by publishing and disseminating knowledge and scholarship as widely and as economically as possible to both scholars and educated laymen. It publishes learned books of small sales potential and limited possibility of financial returns that commercial publishers cannot profitably undertake, and gains favourable publicity and prestige for the university of which it is part.¹¹⁵

The very specific context of a university – and the specific kinds of textual practice undertaken and valorised here – constrains the form that such a press could take. For one thing, the missions of university presses are closely bound

¹¹⁴ Moulder, 'University neutrality,' p. 248.

¹¹⁵ K.O. Darko-Ampem, 'Scholarly Publishing in Africa: A case study of the policies and practices of African university presses' (DPhil dissertation, University of Stirling, 2003), p. 3.

to those of their parent institutions, and the mission-driven nature of their publishing often enables them to publish in a non-commercial or not-for-profit setting (although this particular feature is declining). Because of the close link to research and the practice of peer review, university presses usually confer a certain amount of prestige on their host universities, linking them in the public eye to research and to excellence.

The South African university presses were founded and actively published during a very complex era in South African history, and at a time when scholars and students were fighting for the right to academic freedom and to freedom of speech. This book attempts to fill the gap in our knowledge of local scholarly publishing and its wider context, by focusing on the history of South Africa's university presses, as well as the links and discontinuities between their publishing lists and philosophies, and questions of academic freedom, access to the privilege of publishing, and the research communication cycle. Their publishing programmes will thus be examined to shed new light on this historical period, and on the struggles between academia and the government.

Bourdieu's cultural sociological model of publishing, which he conceptualises as a series of interrelated 'fields,' is widely used to provide a framework for publishing histories, especially when questions of power and hierarchy are considered. Of particular relevance is his conceptualisation of a "field of restricted production" – opposed to a "field of large-scale cultural production" – as this tallies most closely with the conditions under which scholarly publishing operates. University presses publish on the basis of a mandate, often for non-profit purposes; this echoes Bourdieu's view that, "[i]n [the field of restricted production] properly economic profit is secondary to enhancement of the product's symbolic value and to (long-term) accumulation and gestation of symbolic capital by producers and consumers alike."¹¹⁶ Moreover, the specialised use of peer review as a selection mechanism is also a feature of the field of restricted production (FRP): "The FRP is fairly closed on itself and enjoys a high degree of autonomy; this is evident from the power it has to develop its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its products. But even the producer within FRP has to define himself in relation to the public meaning of his work. This meaning originates in the process of circulation and consumption through which the work achieves cultural recognition."¹¹⁷

Bourdieu's theoretical framework has, to date, largely been applied to literary or artistic studies, but a careful reading of his use of the term "cultural" shows that he intends it to refer to the "intellectual, artistic and scientific"

¹¹⁶ Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods,' p. 13.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

fields.¹¹⁸ University press publishing provides a good case study of the intellectual and scientific fields of production. The examination of university presses forms a unique case study because of the balance between commercial imperatives (economic capital) and academic merit (symbolic capital). Caroline Davis, for instance, uses this theoretical understanding to examine the twentieth-century publishing history of OUP in South Africa, although she concludes that “[t]he cross-subsidisation of economic and symbolic capital in the publishing industry is contradictory according to Bourdieu’s model.”¹¹⁹ She finds that, for OUP in particular, “[e]conomic capital generated at the periphery supported the cultural endeavours in the metropole whilst symbolic capital accrued by the academic, Oxford-based Clarendon Press helped sell educational textbooks throughout Africa and Asia.”¹²⁰ The model thus has certain limitations in this specific setting.

Thus, it may be that this model does not apply particularly well to the university presses in South Africa. Developed largely for utilitarian purposes, with a secondary purpose of boosting the research reputation of the host institutions (i.e. symbolic capital), the local presses did not have an economic role (i.e. a profit-making role) until very late in the twentieth century. Although they always struggled for funding and other resources, only recently was there intensified pressure to become self-supporting and even to generate a surplus (a fairly unrealistic expectation given the market size and demand for scholarly books in South Africa). Moreover, the interference of external factors such as the state in the supposedly ‘autonomous’ field of intellectual production is a factor falling beyond an analysis using Bourdieu’s terms. Bourdieu’s model is thus not fully applicable in this context, although it provides a theoretical background for understanding how publishing operates at various different levels.

Another cultural sociologist, Richard Peterson, has also developed a theoretical model to describe the production of cultural goods (like publications), the so-called production of culture perspective.¹²¹ Peterson’s work focuses on the producers at all points of the value chain, which is akin to Bourdieu’s focus on the position-taking of different subjects in the fields of cultural production. However, where Bourdieu does not take into account the producers to a great

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

¹¹⁹ Caroline Davis, ‘Histories of publishing under apartheid: Oxford University Press in South Africa,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37(1) (2011), p. 98.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Richard A. Peterson, ‘Six constraints on the production of literary works,’ *Poetics*, 14 (1985), pp. 45–67.

extent (his focus tends to fall on authors, to a very limited extent publishers, and then on consumers such as critics), Peterson specifically examines those involved in material production processes. He argues that “the nature and content of symbolic products, such as literary works, are significantly shaped by the social, legal, and economic milieux in which they are created, edited, manufactured, marketed, purchased and evaluated.”¹²² This has now become a common way of looking at discourse, in fields such as cultural history and intellectual history. The focus in this study falls to a greater extent on the production and gatekeeping processes described by Peterson than on the authors themselves (i.e. academics), but Peterson’s emphasis on the larger environment is significant.

Because of the limitations of the usual publishing studies frameworks, which do not allow for a detailed study of the political and intellectual influences on knowledge production, I adapted a model from the field of political sociology as a means of examining the relationship between the university presses and academic freedom. In the field of political sociology, there has always been an interest in power and access to power. These methods are increasingly being applied to the domains of science, research and higher education.¹²³ These theories conceptualise power and politics “as a variable function of actors’ relative social location within more or less stable institutional configurations relative to the flexible networks that span those institutions; we see politics as collective action seeking to explicitly reproduce those configurations or, alternatively, to substantially change them.”¹²⁴ This is a useful way of considering the location of academics within universities, their intellectual responses, and their access to platforms for the publication of research findings, i.e. knowledge production.

A Continuum from Resistance to Complicity

The apartheid period was extremely repressive, not least in terms of knowledge production. Many of those affected by censorship and limitations on academic freedom were intellectuals, and particularly academics – although the student bodies of the universities tended to be markedly more radical than the teaching staff. The responses to the imposition of apartheid policies on higher

¹²² Ibid., p. 46.

¹²³ Scott Frickel and Kelly Moore (eds), *The New Political Sociology of Science* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

education and the resulting restrictions on academic freedom were varied, falling along a continuum from resistance to complicity. Some have suggested that the responses can be divided along language lines, as in this study from 1969: "In their reaction to government policy as it has affected academic life, the White universities have sorted themselves into two groups, the one vigorously opposing the government, the other either making no protest or coming out in support of governmental legislation. This sorting has occurred along language lines, with the English-medium universities forming an active opposition to the government and the Afrikaans-medium and Bi-lingual and Non-White colleges supporting the status quo."¹²⁵ But this is an over-simplification, as will be seen. Responses to apartheid were complex, ambiguous and even contradictory at times.

What were the responses of the universities and their presses to the effects of censorship and attacks on their academic freedom? In this book, a methodological instrument will be deployed to answer this question, using a continuum of subject positions or intellectual responses in the academic sphere. There is a need for such a tool to examine patterns in intellectual thinking, given the complexity of stances available. The use of a tool also enables a comparison to be made between institutions, even though their environments may have differed, when applied empirically to the concrete evidence of the actual knowledge production output of those presses.

A system for classifying responses to apartheid has been proposed by political sociologist Heribert Adam.¹²⁶ He suggested six roles for the "dissenting academic," apart from the additional roles of support for the apartheid government. Adam's categorisation specifically addresses the subject positions of academics under the apartheid system. Although it may appear static, the model does not assume the categories as stable or fixed in time, as do some theories of interest groups and political influence; rather, it allows for shifts on a continuum and for a greater level of complexity. Sanders's "theory of intellectual responsibility," which he uses to explain the activities of individuals during apartheid, is of additional interest but does not accommodate the same range of subject positions as the model proposed by Adam.¹²⁷ Finally, Pierre Hugo's work on Afrikaner academics was used to supplement the 'collaboration' end

125 M.J. Ashley and Hendrik W. van der Merwe, 'Academic contrasts in South Africa,' *Sociology of Education*, 42(3) (1969), p. 287.

126 Heribert Adam, 'Predicaments and opinions of critical intellectuals at South African Universities,' in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977).

127 Sanders, *Complicities*, p. ix.

of the scale: those academics who supported or at least did not oppose apartheid policies.¹²⁸

Privatism

The first response of dissenting intellectuals, according to Adam is privatism.¹²⁹ This term implies a withdrawal from active politics, and the selection of safe and non-controversial research and teaching topics. The position may also imply self-censorship. As an example, Adam criticises the absence or under-development of the discipline of Political Science at the English-medium universities during the apartheid era. Various scholars depict academic neutrality as a retreat from responsibility, rather than a valid subject position.

Exile

The second response Adam refers to as exile, which may imply physical (voluntary or involuntary) exile in another country. Exile may also arise as the result of the 'brain drain' to better resourced countries. Adam describes the publications of exiled academics as often offering an unbalanced, emotional perspective, because of their removal from the local environment. Because this response takes the academic out of the local academic and political sphere, it is sometimes difficult to assess the contribution of such academics to local debates.

Liberal Retreat

The third response is that of liberal retreat (in the sense in which 'liberal' is used in South Africa, as discussed). Adam castigates liberals – largely equated with white academics – for the lack of realism in their "visions for the future," such as a 'colour-blind' South Africa. He sees them as being increasingly isolated by black or radical academics, and as being peripheral or even irrelevant to the key intellectual debates. Their position is thus one of retreat from direct engagement with the political system. This is the position most often associated with the 'open' universities, and it was considered an important form of opposition during the segregation era (before apartheid) in particular. The concept of liberalism is thus ambiguous in the South African context, having both positive and negative connotations, depending on perspectives.

128 Hugo, 'Academic dissent'; Pierre Hugo, 'The politics of untruth: Afrikaner academics for apartheid,' *Politikon*, 25(1) (1998), pp. 31–55.

129 Adam, 'Predicaments and opinions,' pp. 269ff.

Militant-radical Stance

The fourth response implies a confrontational stance from academics, who go beyond the 'ivory tower' to become supportive of politics. This stance rejects reform of the apartheid system, rather arguing for confrontation and (even violent) overthrow. Adam describes this as a moralistic position, which may see the academic as having the duty to be a "witness" to atrocities, for instance. This loose grouping is similar to what has also been described as the 'revisionists' and even the 'radical revisionists'.¹³⁰ But, like exile, this goes beyond the scope of the academic sphere and into the political sphere.

Change through Association

The fifth response, while also envisaging the overthrow of apartheid, is far more gradualist in approach. This position enabled academics to attempt to reform their institutions – and society – from within, but as both Adam and Hugo point out, this did leave them open to the threat of co-option. Such a subject position may thus be perceived as playing it safe and even as complicity, through tacit acceptance of the existing system. It is often associated with either English or Afrikaans white academics, who desired political change but were not willing to risk social or other forms of ostracism.

Political Reform

Academics opting for the sixth response cannot limit their reactions to the academic sphere. Rather, they become openly involved in what Adam calls "competing organisations," such as political parties or civil society organisations. These academics cannot necessarily be analysed in terms of their research output, because they focused on a more popular audience and on community engagement. As in the case of exile and of the militant-radical response, this subject position is situated beyond the local academic sphere.

Adam's categorisation may be extended by that of Hugo, in his examination of dissident Afrikaner academics. Hugo has categorised those who did not support apartheid and who wanted to promote academic freedom in terms of "apprehensive" and "cautious activist" academics, in addition to the very small category of those who did protest, and the very large category of those who supported the status quo.¹³¹ The label "apprehensive" refers to those who may support a dissident view, but prefer to remain silent out of concern for the potential (especially personal) consequences – such as a fear of not being

130 David Yudelman, 'Industrialization, Race Relations and Change in South Africa: An Ideological and Academic Debate,' *African Affairs*, 74(294) (1975), p. 92.

131 Hugo, 'Academic dissent.'

promoted, of research grants being withheld, of victimisation, and so on. This appears to be a sub-set of what Adam calls privatism.

Cautious activists, in turn, “do want to stand up for their convictions, but they become strategists who hold their ammunition for situations where the aims seem attainable, and make concessions on the issues which, in the present temper of the time, they consider undebatable.”¹³² They thus prefer to “reform from within,” and improve existing policies, in a form of gradualism. This supports Adam’s category of ‘change through association.’

A further category of intellectual responses that does not easily fall within Adam’s classification is the Afrikaner notion of *lojale verset*, usually translated as either “loyal resistance” or “loyal opposition.” Dating back to the work of poet N.P. van Wyk Louw, the concept of *lojale verset* refers to the promotion of a culture of criticism among Afrikaans intellectuals: “Great criticism emerges when the critic places himself...in the midst of the group he criticizes, when he knows that he is bound unbreakably...to the volk he dares rebuke.”¹³³ Sanders, in developing his conceptualisation of the complicity of academics during apartheid, refers to this concept as “responsibility-in-complicity.”¹³⁴ This concept has at times been seen as a critique of apartheid, and at other times as an apology for apartheid, but in either case it did not envisage political change, at least not to a large extent. The inclusion of such a category enhances the continuum under development, as it carries the potential intellectual responses through to the extreme of complicity, as opposed to the focus of both Adam and Hugo on dissent. It also reveals that even a subject position like complicity is not homogeneous. These additional concepts extend our understanding of Adam’s model, specifically to that area of the continuum that was more supportive of the apartheid system.

The concept of a continuum may be further extended with reference to Stuart Hall’s categorisation of the different subject positions available to an audience when receiving a message – for example, when reading a book. Hall describes three possible positions: the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated code or position, and the globally contrary or oppositional code.¹³⁵ In other words, the social positioning of a publisher and of a reader would affect how they interpreted knowledge and information. If these are situated within the historical and geographical context of scholarly publishing in

¹³² Ibid., p. 251.

¹³³ Sanders, *Complicities*, p. 62.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 203.

¹³⁵ Stuart Hall, ‘Encoding/Decoding,’ in Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (eds), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79* (London: Hutchinson, 1973).

apartheid South Africa, then the positions could be translated as, first, the pro-Establishment publishers and their work – and readers who accepted such work – in the dominant-hegemonic position; secondly, publishers and readers adopting the negotiated position would be those who largely accepted and complied with legislation, but who had personal reservations and who allowed for exceptions in certain, localised situations; and thirdly, those who opposed the government and the political and legal framework in which it functioned – the oppositional publishers, the anti-apartheid lobby, and their readership, who engaged in a “struggle in discourse.”¹³⁶ Hall notes, and this is true of the apartheid era and responses as well, that these positions are “shot through with contradictions.”¹³⁷ These positions clearly echo the responses depicted in the continuum (see Figure 1).

The diagram depicts the continuum in a visual medium. Reading from left to right, the intellectual responses can be classified as moving from a position of complicity, through scientific neutrality, to radical opposition. The overlapping circles show that each position is characterised by a wide range of behaviour and of scholarly output. Moreover, as the arrows show, an academic's place on the model is not necessarily fixed; rather, it could shift over time and in different contexts, and responses could fall into more than one category at different times. It is important to note that some of the positions fall outside the academic sphere (notably the militant-radical and exile categories); they may thus be of relevance to a wider consideration of opposition to apartheid, but not to the intellectual responses from within universities. Academics at times would move outside the academic sphere to protest more openly or effectively. The model thus shows the extent to which the political sphere dominated the academic sphere.

In the international context, oppositional publishing has emerged in contexts of state oppression, although the terms used in the literature vary widely: we may be speaking, variously, of alternative, subversive, undermining, anti-establishment, left-wing, radical, interventionist, or progressive publishing, and there may also be an overlap with what is broadly known as independent publishing. For example, Stanley Ridge describes the African Bookman as a “progressive publisher,” which is a term that is deliberately broad in scope, including liberal, communist and generally non-racial sentiments.¹³⁸ In turn,

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 517.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 516.

¹³⁸ Stanley Ridge, ‘The African Bookman: A progressive South African publisher before 1948,’ in Cora Ovens (ed.), *From Papyrus to Print-Out: The Book in Africa (Bibliophilia Africana 8)* (Cape Town: National Library of South Africa, 2005), p. 96.

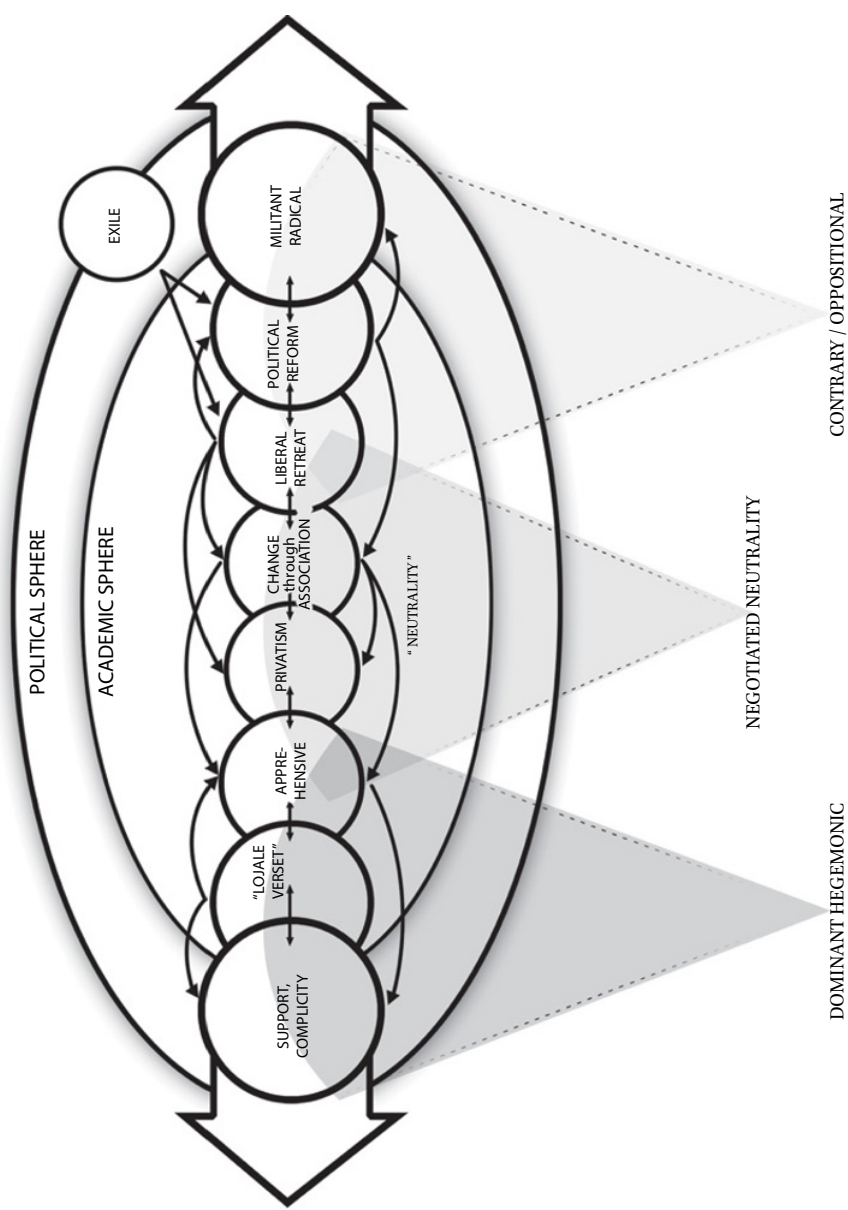


FIGURE 1 A continuum of intellectual response in the apartheid context

Peter McDonald uses the phrase “interventionist publishing” to describe such publishers as the African Bookman and Taurus; although he does not define the term, it is clearly intended to be used in the same way as progressive publishing.¹³⁹ The term I prefer to use is that of David Philip, i.e. “oppositional publishing” – which may be defined, quite simply, as “anti-apartheid and pro-conservation.”¹⁴⁰ More broadly, Wright defines oppositional publishing as “books that challenge the ways things are.”¹⁴¹

Did South Africa’s university presses play an oppositional role during the apartheid period, producing publications that challenged public perceptions and the government, or did they play a more apolitical role? If they ‘failed’ as oppositional publishers, why is this the case? Can the concrete evidence of a scholarly publisher’s output be used to comment on patterns in intellectual thinking? In answering this question, I reflect on academic freedom in South Africa during the apartheid era, and contribute to the debate on social and intellectual history during this period by providing a lens for examining the impact of apartheid policies on higher education, research and the circulation of knowledge in society.

Through archival research, a literature review, and the compilation and analysis of bibliographies, I aim in this study to sketch a social history of the South African university presses focusing on the twentieth century, and specifically the apartheid period. An examination of the histories, organisation and achievements of the country’s university presses during this period – i.e. the university presses of the Universities of the Witwatersrand, of Natal, and of Unisa – provide insight into the country’s narratives of colonialism and decolonisation, nationalism and identity, as these are reflected in the knowledge production of academics of the apartheid period. The results are also expected to deepen our understanding of intellectual history during a significant period of South African history, and to have an impact on the present by strengthening the current practices of university presses, both in South Africa and beyond.

Archival Limits

This study relies on the use of archival and supplementary sources (such as interviews and book reviews), but it is important to recognise the limits of

139 Peter McDonald, ‘The Book in South Africa,’ in Derek Attwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of South African Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

140 Philip, ‘Book Publishing,’ p. 43.

141 Nick Wright, ‘A chance for left books to press ahead,’ *Morning Star* (2 November 2009).

these methods. The key problem is missing or incomplete records. While it is unlikely that records in the university archives are absent due to a deliberate policy of excising information from the record, it appears that records were retained or discarded depending on the personal wishes of the directors of the presses concerned, as well as the archiving policies of the institution as a whole. Thus, Unisa has kept almost everything, while Wits and Natal have been far more selective in what has been retained. For example, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's archives, there are folders of minutes for the Press Committee from 1967 to 1974, 1975 to 1985, and 1987 to 1990, but not for other years. As handwritten references may be found to the minutes of earlier meetings, from 1948 onwards, these must have been mislaid or destroyed since then. At Wits, there is evidence of archiving from the 1920s, and more systematic record-keeping from the late 1940s until 1969, after which the main records are still located at the university press and not in the archives. This inevitably creates gaps in the record.

The records for Fort Hare are patchier still, and it appears that "[t]he troubled history of Fort Hare since the 1950s has had an impact on the archival sources for its history."¹⁴² Some documents are now held at another institution altogether, at the Cory Library at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, while "a large collection which is central to the study of Fort Hare itself lies unused for historical purposes at the university, and is at present inadequately cataloged and described."¹⁴³ In fact, because of the scarcity of documentary evidence and the difficulty in obtaining other forms of data, it was not viable to include the University of Fort Hare Press. Reference will be made to this Press in passing, but a detailed analysis was not possible on the basis of the available evidence.

There is also an ongoing danger that important documents about the university presses are not being archived. I was personally present at Unisa Press when the Executive Director to whom the Press reported elected to pulp all the records and backlist books remaining in an old storeroom – and I was fortunate to be able to salvage certain records. How often has this happened without similar intervention? The dearth of records on the university presses at certain institutions thus led me to speculate on the importance (or lack thereof) of the presses to their parent institutions.

142 Sean Morrow and Khayaletu Gxabalashe, 'The Records of the University of Fort Hare,' *History in Africa*, 27 (2000), p. 484.

143 *Ibid.*, p. 486.

Conclusion

This social history of the university presses is the first of its kind in South Africa, and it has wider resonance with areas of study such as book history, censorship, knowledge production, scholarly publishing, and even political sociology. The study examines academic freedom in South Africa during the apartheid era, through the lens of scholarly publishing. In other words, the actual output of university presses – the knowledge production of the apartheid era – is used as a proxy to examine the shifting attitudes and oppositional stances of academics.

In this study, I situate university press publishing, which has often been associated with the promotion of academic freedom, between the poles of resistance and complicity when considering intellectual responses to apartheid. Yet, it is argued, the history of this form of scholarly publishing has largely been ignored thus far, due to a perception that it had little to tell us about either apartheid or the struggle against it. However, the social history of South Africa's university presses – at Wits, Natal and Unisa, in particular, and to some extent at Fort Hare and Cape Town – provides a new angle for examining academic freedom and knowledge production during the apartheid era.

Using a hybrid methodology including archival research, historical bibliography, and political sociology, this study examines the origins, publishing lists and philosophies of the university presses through the lens of a continuum of intellectual responses: ranging from collaboration and complicity, to opposition and dissidence. Results reveal the social impact of the presses' publishing programmes, showing that, over time, the positions and publishing strategies adopted by the South African university presses shifted, becoming more liberal. It is argued, however, that the university presses should not be considered oppositional or anti-apartheid publishers, in part because they did not resist the censorship regime of the government, and in part because they operated within the constraints of publicly funded, bureaucratic institutions of higher education. They nonetheless produced an important, if under-valued, body of work and provided a platform for a variety of academic opinions.

Moreover, the university presses faced a variety of challenges in their struggle to survive over the years, including financial pressures, international competition, and wavering institutional support. But perhaps the greatest challenge was a delicate balancing act: an attempt to promote academic freedom within a climate of political repression, censorship and ideology.

Origins of South Africa's University Presses

The first university press to set up shop in South Africa was not local. Oxford University Press (OUP) opened a Southern African sales office in 1915, “with the primary purpose of selling that notoriously unvendible commodity, the Clarendon Press book.”¹ But OUP was not involved in local knowledge production in South Africa for some time. Actual book production, even for local authors, did not move from the UK until after World War II. In the 1920s, Eric Parnwell was sent to South Africa to evaluate the branch and to make recommendations on options for the future. His report “articulated his plan for a racially-stratified publishing policy in South Africa.”² Scholarly titles continued to be published in Oxford, and exported for the white minority in the colony, while schoolbooks were locally produced for the ‘Native Education’ programme. In 1946, the local OUP branch was permitted to begin publishing scholarly work from its Cape Town office, with its first title, *South African Short Stories*, appearing in 1947. Leo Marquard was appointed with the specific aim of publishing “special books for Africa particularly in the educational sphere.”³

When the South African universities began to establish presses in the first half of the twentieth century, they explicitly looked to OUP for a model, and created their presses in its image. This influence may be seen in the visits to OUP by representatives of various university presses, such as Unisa and Natal, to examine how it operated. The universities themselves looked to the institutional models of Oxford and Cambridge, too.

The Oxford Model

The historical development of university presses has been traced to the fifteenth century, soon after the introduction of the printing press in Europe. In particular, the presses established at Oxford and Cambridge are considered precursors of today's university presses. Although the first printing press to be

1 P. Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press: An informal history* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 115.

2 Caroline Davis, ‘Histories of publishing under apartheid: Oxford University Press in South Africa,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37(1) (2011), p. 81.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

established was at the Sorbonne in Paris, this cannot be considered a true university press; it is more accurate to call it one of the first private presses.⁴ Similarly, while some attribute the origins of European academic printing and publishing to Salamanca, in Spain, in 1481, the printers of the time were not officially associated with the university.⁵

It was only with the establishment of the printing presses at Cambridge and Oxford, that what we now recognise as a university press begins to take shape. The original model of the university press (although not universal and presently in flux) is thus a British one. Black agrees, stating that “the institution is for all practical purposes a British invention, since the ancient presses of Cambridge and Oxford are the only two scholarly presses from the early period of printing which have a continuous record of activity under the same ownership and authority to the present day, and which are actually governed by the universities themselves; and it is these two which have essentially provided the pattern on which other university presses have usually modelled themselves.”⁶ As a result, “it is astonishing how much similarity there is across the range of scholarly publishers in the English-speaking world”⁷ – a transnational influence that seemingly transcends national differences. The most commonly cited model is that of Oxford University Press, perhaps ironic given the disarray in which that press began and operated for several hundred years, yet somewhat more obvious when one considers the expansion of OUP into various key Commonwealth states.

The Waldock Report, which was commissioned by Oxford University Press in the 1960s to examine its own operations, highlighted the following elements as being central to a university press:

1. the constitutional position of the Press in relation to its University;
2. the composition, structure, and powers of its senior management;
3. any general directives or understandings in regard to the functions of the Press as a University Press and any limitations upon the scope of its publishing activities;
4. the relations between the Press and the faculties in its University;
5. the financial relationship of the Press to the University.⁸

4 Rudolf Hirsch, *Printing, Selling and Reading 1450–1550* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), p. 51.

5 F.J. Norton, *Printing in Spain, 1501–1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 24.

6 Michael Black, *Cambridge University Press 1584–1984* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 3.

7 R. Derricourt, *An Author's Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 6.

8 Waldock Report, ‘Commission of Enquiry into Oxford University Press’ (Oxford: OUP, 1967), Available online: <http://www.btinternet.com/~akme/waldock.html>.

As OUP describes itself, “the most characteristic feature of the Press is its commitment to publish learned works in the arts and sciences and to sustain the research on which some of these are based.”⁹ The Oxford model, as I call it, sets up some of the basic principles which are so familiar today: the use of a board of academics to serve as gatekeepers and to maintain quality and scholarly integrity; the focus on scholarly works, grounded in research; and even the non-profit nature of so many university presses.¹⁰ The use of peer review to guarantee quality provides much of the symbolic capital associated with university press publishing. The model of the university press used across the former British colonies is very similar; as Dubow points out, “the desire to emulate British norms was always present and deference to the metropole was an ingrained reflex.”¹¹ Moodie adds, more poetically, that “footprints of the British imperial past are clearly discernible in the universities.”¹² This may be seen in the anglophone settler colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as India.

In the United States, university presses emerged along with a specific model of a research university; indeed, “[u]niversity presses began to rise and flourish in the United States because they were an indispensable component of the modern research university itself.”¹³ As Basbanes notes, “the American form of academic press emerg[ed] in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a response to the professionalization of scholarship then taking place throughout the United States and Canada, and as a way to document the pioneering work being produced.”¹⁴ The very first scholarly printing on that continent was done at Harvard as early as 1643, but that university did not establish a press in its own name until 1913. Hall, who wrote the official history of the Press, points out that Harvard University Press was founded explicitly with

9 Oxford University Press, *The Oxford University Press since 1478* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 3.

10 See also Elizabeth le Roux, ‘Transforming a Publishing Division into a Scholarly Press: A Feasibility Study of the Africa Institute of South Africa’ (MIS dissertation, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2007).

11 Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, sensibility and white South Africa 1820–2000* (Oxford: OUP and Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006), p. 74.

12 Graeme Moodie, ‘The state and the liberal universities in South Africa: 1948–1990,’ *Higher Education*, 27 (1994), pp. 1–2.

13 P. Givler, ‘University Press Publishing in the United States,’ in R.E. Abel and L.W. Newman (eds), *Scholarly Publishing: Books, Journals, Publishers and Libraries in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Wiley, 2002).

14 N. Basbanes, *A World of Letters: Yale University Press 1908–2008* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 3–4.

the presses of Oxford and Cambridge as models.¹⁵ An article in the *Authors League Bulletin* in 1919 remarked on the growth of and model for university presses: "A new group of publishing houses is arising in this country following a successful and ancient English precedent."¹⁶ One of the effects of the rise and expansion of American university publishing is that the original model has been adapted and modified to some extent in the new context, as Altbach describes: "British influences, powerful in the American colonies in the 18th century, were combined with other foreign ideas and indigenous patterns to form the American academic model, which itself has been an extraordinarily powerful force, particularly in the post World War II period."¹⁷

While this model can be traced fairly consistently with the development of university presses in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and India, the pattern has been followed with only limited success in African countries. Africa's publishing history is relatively short, given the impact of colonisation, and decolonisation was required before the indigenous publishing industry could take off. University presses were thus established on this continent only in the twentieth century, after higher education grew in size and scope. Darko-Ampem makes it clear that, like higher education institutions themselves, university presses are a relative newcomer in African countries: "[i]n the former British colonies, apart from the early beginning at Fourah Bay in 1827, there were no universities till 1948, and no university presses till Ibadan established a nucleus of one in 1952."¹⁸ The university presses in Africa were, on the whole, created to solve the problems of access to student textbooks, as well as to provide local knowledge and research that was appropriate for and relevant to students. Barbour points out that, "[w]hen universities began to be established after World War II in what were then colonial territories, the lack of a suitable range of books on the history, geography or political systems of the African continent, of its major regions or of the particular countries was a severe constraint on the development of appropriate disciplines and courses."¹⁹ The answer was to develop locally relevant materials, as the imported books were also too expensive.

15 Max Hall, *Harvard University Press: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 8.

16 Quoted in Chester Kerr, *The American University as Publisher* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), p. 4.

17 Philip Altbach, 'Twisted roots: The Western impact on Asian higher education,' *Higher Education*, 18 (1989), p. 11.

18 K.O. Darko-Ampem, 'Scholarly Publishing in Africa: A case study of the policies and practices of African university presses' (DPhil dissertation, University of Stirling, 2003), p. 4.

19 Michael Barbour, 'The Supply of Books and Articles about African Countries,' *African Affairs*, 83(330) (1984), pp. 95–96.

Accessibility and affordability have been major issues for African institutions of higher education. Their presses, mostly set up after the introduction of structural adjustment programmes and the impact of World Bank policies that constrained higher education, include those located at the universities of Dar es Salaam (1979), Nairobi (1984), Makerere (1979) and Addis Ababa (1967). Notably, very few university presses have been established in the Francophone or Lusophone countries; their indigenous publishing industries are less developed on the whole. Exceptions include the Presse Universitaire d'Afrique in Yaoundé and of Dakar in Senegal. In Egypt, we find the American University of Cairo hosting a press, plus a few others in the Maghreb countries. These university presses – in general contrast to the situation of those in South Africa – have struggled ever since their establishment as they have been weak, poorly funded, and both understaffed and underskilled. They have also had to deal with the generic problems of publishing in Africa, including very small literate markets and uncertain access to capital. Under such constraints, the university presses have usually acted as service departments for their parent institutions, but also, as Darko-Ampem points out, “[a]n African university press must have an added responsibility towards the society by engaging in all genres of publishing – scholarly, academic, as well as general.”²⁰ Similarly, Barbour, describing the viability of African university presses as doubtful, sees them as having a wider role by necessity: “if they are still in operation, it is often because they have been employed in routine government printing.”²¹ A service role may thus be added to the key features of a typical university press in this context.

This brief discussion reveals the spread and extent of the influence of Oxford University Press and its particular model of scholarly publishing. It seems likely that the use of such a model and the patterns of power and control emerging from this (neo)imperial situation would have profound and lasting implications for the running of such presses, for the values they transfer, for the knowledge they produce and disseminate, and for the relationship between them and the societies in which they operate. In other words, not only print itself (in the form of texts), but also *models* for publishing and disseminating print were transmitted from the colonial metropole to other territories during the twentieth century. The use and replication of such models has contributed to “the traffic of symbolic capital across boundaries of metropole and colony.”²² This reinforces the theoretical position that “print has been central to the

20 Darko-Ampem, ‘Scholarly Publishing in Africa,’ p. 13.

21 Barbour, ‘The Supply of Books,’ p. 98.

22 Andrew van der Vlies, ‘Introduction: The Institutions of South African Literature,’ *English Studies in Africa*, 47(1) (2004), p. 6.

shaping of Western society, and to the transmission of its values outwards (whether imposed or voluntarily) into colonized and connected societies and territories.”²³ The South African situation introduced the added complications of nationalist imperatives and political repression to the colonial influence.

South Africa's First University Press

At the university colleges, and before a formal university press was established, there was some ad hoc publication of reports and inaugural lectures, such as a lecture by Reverend J. Hertz of Columbia University on ‘The Place of the University in Modern Life’ at the Transvaal University College (now the University of Pretoria) in 1906, and an address delivered by Lord Selborne to the University of the Cape of Good Hope (now the University of South Africa) in 1909. Two early notable publications in this regard by the University College, Johannesburg (then part of the University of South Africa) include the publication of an inaugural lecture by Professor J.L. Landau on *The Study of Hebrew: Its past and its future* (1919), and the publication of a series of lectures by Professor John Dalton, known collectively as *The Rudiments of Relativity* (1921). The South African School of Mines and Technology, the precursor to Wits University, published some early titles in its name as well, including *Economics in the Light of War* by Professor Robert Lehfeldt (1916).

In 1922, the South African School of Mines and Technology became the University of the Witwatersrand. The establishment of a university press at Wits was bound up with the establishment of the new university; indeed, it was suggested to the Principal, Jan Hofmeyr, as early as the first meeting of Senate. The Minutes give little detail of any debate on the matter, noting only that “the Principal reported that the Syndic of the Wits Council of Education had decided to refer to the Senate the desirability of issuing all approved publications of the Syndic under the name of ‘The University of Witwatersrand Press’ ... The Senate concurred with this suggestion.”²⁴ Hofmeyr’s keen adoption of the Oxford model for the press, and for the university broadly speaking, may possibly be attributed to his own education at Oxford University (as a Rhodes scholar, he had read Classics at Balliol College). It also reveals his vision for the university: although it operated in an imperial knowledge network, it

23 D. Finkelstein and A. McCleery (eds), *The Book History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 4.

24 Council of Education, 7 March 1922.

was expected to produce original research and to contribute to a worldwide scholarly conversation.

This situates the University of Witwatersrand Press as the first university press in South Africa to publish local scholarly material: in 1922, the fledgling press of the fledgling university published both the first issue of what was to become a highly prestigious journal, *Bantu Studies*, and Wits Economics Professor Robert Lehfeldt's *The National Resources of South Africa* (see Figure 2). The latter title bore a preface by Jan Smuts, then the Prime Minister of South Africa, underlining its significance to the institution and the wider society. Longmans, Green & Co undertook to act as agents in the UK after correspondence with the Oxford and Cambridge university presses was deemed unsatisfactory.

Interestingly, this was at precisely the same time as Australia's university presses began publishing. Melbourne University Press was also officially established in 1922, and published its first title in 1923.²⁵ The move to establish universities and presses may be seen as part of a wider decolonising trend among some of Britain's settler colonies after World War I. It also reinforces the notion that scholarly publishing has followed a remarkably similar trajectory around the English-speaking world.

The sources do not all agree on the founding date of what is now known as Wits University Press (WUP). The oldest documents record a date of 1922, when the Senate approval was given for the establishment of a press, and the first book was published. The first Publications Committee met for the first time on 2 July 1923. A background document on WUP circulated in 1983 thus notes that WUP was "established in 1923 to take over publication of *Bantu Studies*."²⁶ This information was carried through into the official history of the University, with Murray noting that "...in 1923 the Witwatersrand University Press was founded to publish the journal and other manuscripts approved by the Council of Education, which provided the funds, and the University Senate, which gave the academic stamp of approval."²⁷ Murray corrects the date of establishment to 1922 in his later work on the history of Wits University, and notes that, while WUP was "a small, under-funded operation," the Press "was nonetheless

25 Thompson, F., 'Case study: University presses,' in C. Munro and R. Sheahan-Bright (eds), *Paper Empires: A history of the book in Australia, 1946–2005* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2006), p. 329.

26 N.H. Wilson, 'Witwatersrand University Press and Authors.' Memo submitted to Publications Committee (26/07/1983), WUA, p. 1.

27 B. Murray, *Wits: The early years* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1982), p. 138.

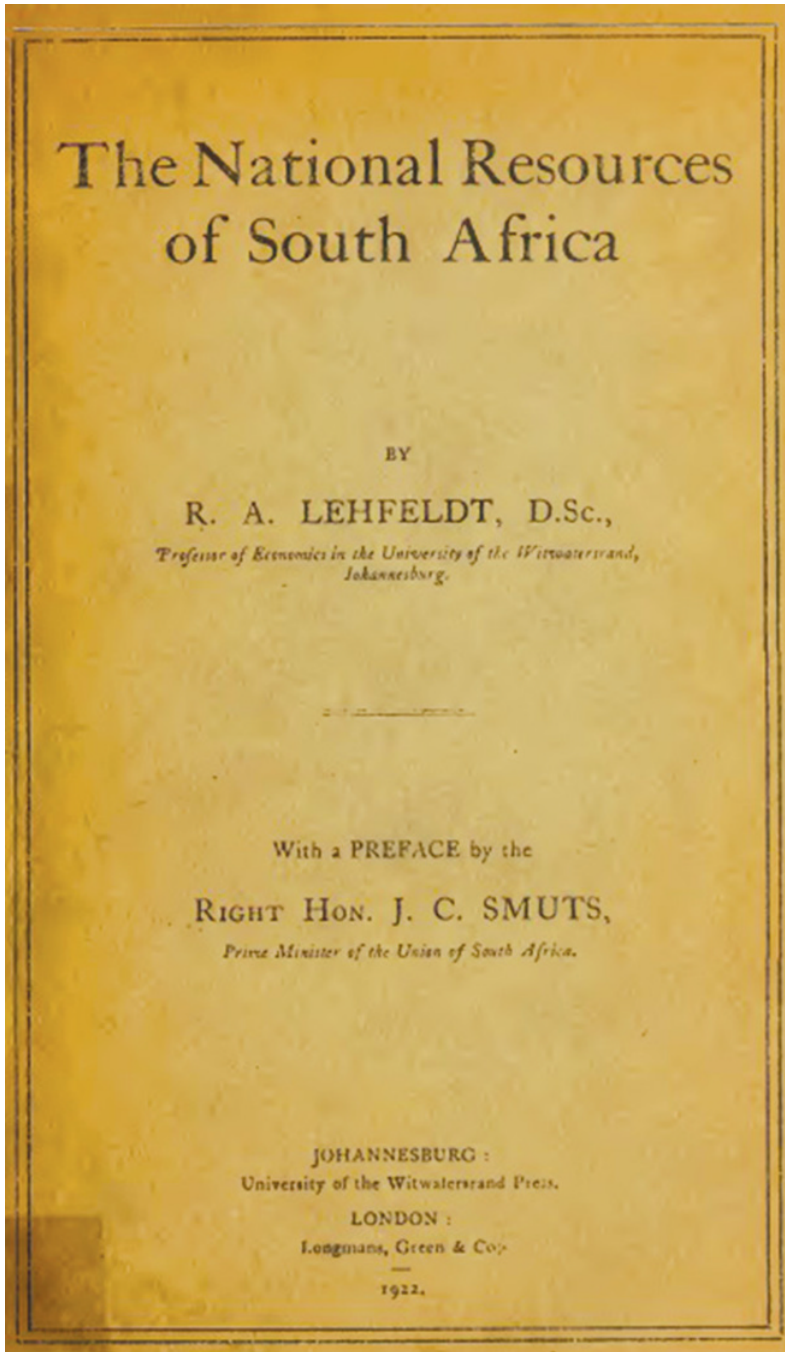


FIGURE 2 Title page of the first WUP book, 1922 (Reproduced with permission of Wits University Press)

responsible for a series of important publications.”²⁸ “Otherwise,” he continues, “WUP was mainly concerned to publish works by members of the Wits staff, and after World War II it also published the inaugural lectures of Wits professors.” Some sources also state the date as 1921, probably because the first issue of the journal *Bantu Studies* was produced late that year. This kind of inaccuracy regarding dates and other matters has been found to be common in the records of each university press.

At this time, the University had six faculties – Arts, Commerce, Engineering, Law, Medicine, and Science – with just 73 academics and around 1 000 students. The publications programme of the university press, as will be seen, was at first closely associated with these faculties and dependent on the output of this small group of academics. Because of those involved in its founding, the early years of the press would be coloured by the political views of these English-speaking liberals. Jannie (“Onse Jan”) Hofmeyr, the first Principal, spoke at his 1919 installation of the need for the university to “know no distinctions of class or wealth, race or creed.”²⁹ The early years of WUP were shaped by the English-speaking liberals who made up the majority of the academic staff and five-member Publications Committee. The first Publications Committee comprised Professors Max Drennan (Chairman), Henry Heather, L.F. Maingard, Charles Moss, and J.D. Rheinallt Jones. Men such as J.F.H. Hoernlé, Edgar Brookes, and Rheinallt Jones would all be involved in setting up the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1929. Maingard was closely associated with the liberal group of scholars in the Department of Bantu Studies around Clement Doke, but other academics were less politically inclined. Drennan, for instance, was a moderate professor of English with a decidedly apolitical focus on Chaucer; Heather, a mining and electrical engineering specialist; and Moss, first professor of Botany at the university. This unthreatening liberalism or gentle dissociation from politics characterised the first generation of scholars to be published by, and to influence the publishing decisions of, Wits University Press.

This liberalism has a special meaning and history in South Africa: “To be ‘liberal’ in South Africa is to demand limitations on the power of government, holding it to strict adherence to the rule of law and demanding protection of minorities, individuals, and non-governmental entities like the press.”³⁰ However,

28 B. Murray, *Wits: The ‘open’ years* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), p. 166.

29 Quoted in Mervyn Shear, *Wits: A University in the Apartheid Era* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1996), p. 1.

30 Jeffrey Butler, Richard Elphick and David Welsh (eds), *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1987), p. 3.

'liberal' was also used in a more derogatory sense, given that many of those identified as 'liberal' did not oppose racial segregation. Adam castigated liberals – largely equated with white academics – for their lack of realism.³¹ He saw them as isolated from black and radical academics, and as being peripheral to key intellectual debates. But patterns of liberal thinking also changed over time.

Operationally, the university press was at first integrated with the Library. Percy Freer was the first Librarian at Wits, a post he took up in November 1929, and he became a member of the Publications Committee in 1934. Ever since that date, the Librarian has served on the Committee – and often played a much more important role. At first, the Wits Librarian was mostly involved in exchange agreements but as of September 1937 was also tasked with editing the works published by WUP and upholding the "technical standards" of the Press.³² It was soon also resolved that "negotiations for distribution of series, appointment of agents and other similar matters relating to books published by the University Press, be left in the hands of the Librarian."³³ The first book proof-read by Percy Freer was Solomon Neumark's *The Citrus Industry of South Africa*, as the author was Afrikaans-speaking and thus had some difficulty with writing in English (this was also the first text to be sold on a "sale or return" basis in local bookstores, a landmark in terms of distribution). It was an ongoing struggle for Freer to balance the demands of his two portfolios, and he complained in the 1940s that, "The output of Witwatersrand University Press publications is constantly growing, with the result that the time left for the fulfillment of my proper duties as Librarian is correspondingly decreasing."³⁴ But until as late as the 1950s, the press had still not been formalised as a separate department with its own staff, as a newspaper article reveals: "The University Press falls under the management of the library, and although there is no separate section of the library staff detailed for work solely on publications, this will no doubt come in time."³⁵

The early publishing list is small, and features a number of inaugural lectures and reprints from *Bantu Studies*. The main preoccupation of the WUP publications for the first decades was native law and race relations, largely because of the interests of the early Publications Committee members. Rheinallt Jones,

31 Heribert Adam, 'Predicaments and opinions of critical intellectuals at South African Universities,' in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977).

32 M.A. Hutchings, 'Witwatersrand University Press 1922–1969' (Unpublished report, 1969), WUA, p. 9.

33 Ibid., p. 10.

34 Correspondence, Percy Freer to Registrar (23 August 1944), WUA.

35 Anon., 'The expanding work of the Witwatersrand University Press,' *The Star* (Johannesburg) (7 January 1955).

as has been mentioned, was involved in research to find a solution to the “native question” and was instrumental in setting up the South African Institute of Race Relations; he was also secretary of the Witwatersrand Council of Education.³⁶ In line with this focus, early funding for the press came from the Council on Education and donations from the Native Recruiting Corporation and Wits Native Labour Association. Some key texts from this period include Clement Doke’s works on *The Phonetics of the Zulu Language*, *Textbook of Zulu Grammar* and *Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, and John Henderson Soga’s *The South Eastern Bantu*, as well as Doke and Rheinallt Jones’s *Bushmen of the Southern Kalahari*.

Two publications exemplify the early years of publishing at Wits University Press. The one is the flagship journal, *Bantu Studies*, and the other is the Bantu Treasury Series. The journal was created by Rheinallt Jones and the Department of Bantu Studies in a deliberate attempt to make black (South) Africans both the subject and agent of study.³⁷ The first issue of the journal was fully funded by the Council on Education, but from the second issue it was produced by Wits University Press. The long-time editor was Clement Doke. Doke joined the Department of Bantu Studies when it was established, having retired from life as a missionary due to ill health. His sense of mission did not abate; rather, he turned to academic interests, and specifically African languages. His zeal extended to an attempt, as R.K. Herbert describes, “to initiate an intellectual revolution in the study of African languages and in the making and creation of Bantu literature.”³⁸ Doke’s sense of mission also led him to oppose the increasing segregation of South African society, by appointing black academics in what was then an all-white, segregated university.

The journal was established to bring together the various researchers working in isolation on “Native Studies,” and also to make a contribution to the global debate. The first editorial notes, “It has long been a matter for reproach that in the one field of study in which she should have been pre-eminent, South Africa has been sadly neglectful of her ability to contribute to the world’s knowledge on anthropological and allied subjects.”³⁹ While it appeared irregularly until 1930, the journal attracted some of the most significant authors of the time. Indeed, within twenty years – at the time that the name was changed to *African Studies* and the scope broadened accordingly – it was boasted that

36 Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*.

37 The Department focused on linguistics and ethnography, and the name ‘Bantu’ reflects both of these strands. It was not considered derogatory at the time.

38 Robert K. Herbert, ‘Not with one mouth,’ *African Studies*, 52(2) (1993), p. 2.

39 ‘Editorial: Native Studies in South Africa,’ *Bantu Studies*, 1 (1921), p. 1.

the journal had published “complete and authoritative surveys...of the present state of our knowledge in three branches of Bantu Studies”: native languages, ethnography, and prehistory.⁴⁰

The first issue of *Bantu Studies* argued that the classification and analysis of languages was necessary for “the efficient performance of the white man’s function in this country.”⁴¹ This phrase exposes the power dynamics behind this apparently liberal perspective. While Doke’s legacy is usually hailed as a positive one, there has been criticism of his colonially blinkered and arrogant approach to the study of language, usually couched in terms of white men imposing their own standards and norms on various African languages. As Attwell notes, “Journals like *Bantu Studies*...were overwhelmingly ethnographic in their treatment of black expression with all the attendant problems of othering and ‘fixing’ representations in condescending and ahistorical terms.”⁴² There are thus political implications to Doke’s commitment to the development of autonomous literary cultures in the Southern African languages, based on paternalist assumptions about literature and development.

The impulse to establish the Bantu Treasury Series in 1935 also came from Doke, not from WUP. It has been suggested that the inspiration for this series may have been the publication, in 1930, of Sol T. Plaatje’s novel *Mhudi*. The novel was published in English rather than Setswana – indeed, it is often identified as the first novel in English by a black South African author – and Doke may have initiated the series in response, to support writing in the African languages. In a review of *Mhudi*, Doke observed:

It is a great pity that for Bantu publications the demand is at present so small among the Bantu themselves that books such as this have to be written in English. *Mhudi* written in Chwana [Setswana] would have been a still greater contribution, and Chwana sadly needs such additions to its present meagre literature.⁴³

Moreover:

Provided publication outlets can be found for the numerous manuscripts available, Xhosa literature and reading-material will easily keep pace

40 Advertisement, *African Studies*, 1(1) (1942), p. 66.

41 ‘Editorial: Native Studies in South Africa,’ p. 1.

42 David Attwell, ‘Modernizing Tradition/Traditionalizing Modernity: Reflections on the Dhlomo-Vilakazi Dispute,’ *Research in African Literatures*, 33(1) (2002), p. 97.

43 Clement Doke, ‘Book Review: *Mhudi*,’ *Bantu Studies*, 5 (1931), p. 260.

with the demand. ... With regard to books suitable for general and cultural reading in the upper classes, Zulu is not in so fortunate a position as is Xhosa. ... There is still a dearth in Zulu of imaginative literature, and a Zulu novelist has yet to be found.⁴⁴

Yet, at the same time as the first novels by black authors were being published in English in South Africa, ground was also being broken with the first novels in isiZulu, which have been variously identified as *Abantu Abamnyama* by Magama Fuze (published in Pietermaritzburg in 1922) and John Dube's *Insila kaShaka* (Marianhill, 1933).⁴⁵ Moreover, in the same year that Doke was commenting on the absence of isiZulu novelists – 1935 – Benedict Vilakazi published his first novel in the isiZulu language, *Noma Nini*, at Marianhill, a mission press. *Noma Nini*, written around 1932, won a prize in 1933 from the International African Institute and was then published. Vilakazi was by this stage already well known for his writing in African-language newspapers. He was also becoming increasingly vocal in the struggle against separate development. He was also an academic, having completed his MA thesis in 1938 on 'The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu,' and his doctorate in literature, in 1946, with 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni' – the first D.Litt to be awarded to a black South African.⁴⁶ Doke also worked with Vilakazi on a huge collaborative Zulu-English Dictionary, which was published the year after Vilakazi died in 1947. The two volumes of dictionaries are still "among the most comprehensive and scholarly yet produced for any Bantu language."⁴⁷ It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Vilakazi, as an academic at the university, a protégé of Doke's, and an increasingly well-known author, was the first to be published in the Bantu Treasury Series. His collection of poems, *Inkondlo kaZulu* ('Zulu Songs'), was warmly welcomed as the "first collection of western influenced poetry in Zulu to be published."⁴⁸

The Bantu Treasury Series and Vilakazi's *Inkondlo kaZulu* were warmly received, as this review reveals:

The University deserves hearty commendation for making possible this first venture of a South African Native in the field of poetry. The title-page

44 Clement Doke, 'Vernacular Text-Books in South African Native Schools,' *Africa*, 8(2) (1935), p. 190.

45 Hlonipha Mokoena, *Magama Fuze: The Making of a Xhosa Intellectual* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011).

46 Clement Doke, 'Foreword,' *African Studies*, 8(4) (1949), p. 165.

47 Murray, *Wits: The early years*, p. 139.

48 J. Dexter Taylor, 'Review of *Inkondlo kaZulu*,' *Bantu Studies*, 9 (1935), p. 163; Doke, 'Foreword.'

bears the title 'The Bantu Treasury,' and gives promise of a series to be, in which the best literary work of Bantu writers in their own languages shall be made available for their natural audience, and so shall become a stimulus to intellectual and spiritual growth. There is a steadily increasing group of young Africans who are possessed of literary talent and are working hard to perfect themselves in various media of expression. The invitation that the title page of this first volume of a projected series holds forth will be to them an open door of opportunity. ... The success of the series will depend in large measure upon the support given it by African readers.⁴⁹

The reviewer went on to comment on the design and paratext of the book: "A word must be said about the outward appearance of the book. The dignity of its simple blue cloth binding, with the seal of the University on the cover, the clear print and perfect proof-reading are not only a credit to the Editors and to the Lovedale Press [the printers of the work], but they are a quiet testimony to the recognition given to these poems as real literature, worthy of preservation and of presentation to their readers in a form of beauty."⁵⁰ This description of the paratext situates the work and its author as serious, and as meriting the attention of a scholarly press.

The Early Apartheid Years

In 1948, the National Party came to power. One consequence was a split in liberal ranks, and the decline of the United Party. Liberalism in this period is usually associated with pluralism, or the recognition of racial and cultural difference, but support for segregation was waning. Moreover, the imposition of apartheid policies on the higher education system from the 1950s onwards led to considerable changes to that system. As racially focused policies were imposed on the universities, and institutional autonomy appeared threatened, debates around the concept of academic freedom grew. The universities remained largely compliant with state policies.

At WUP, when Max Drennan retired in the 1940s, Humphrey Raikes took over as Chairman of the Publications Committee. Raikes, who had been an Industrial Chemist, also became Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University, and he deliberately intervened in publishing decisions. An example of

49 Taylor, 'Review of *Inkondlo kaZulu*,' p. 163.

50 Ibid., p. 165.

Raikes's influence over the publishing strategy of the press may be seen in the fact that Dr William Harding le Riche's study of *A Health Survey of African Children in Alexandra Township* (1943) was "undertaken at the request of Mr Humphrey Raikes, Principal of the University."⁵¹ Raikes also influenced the international distribution efforts of the press, arguing in a letter to Oxford University Press: "We feel that publishing in this country, while it is satisfactory as far as the Union [of South Africa] is concerned, will not give adequate publicity to what we consider to be useful material."⁵² As the pressure of work as Principal intensified, Raikes relinquished his role as Chairman in 1946, and John Greig was elected in his place. Greig was a literary scholar who had succeeded Drennan as head of the Department of English, and was a moderate liberal. He was followed, in turn, from the 1950s until 1982, by Desmond Cole of the Department of Bantu Studies. Cole was not an apartheid apologist, but his position of academic neutrality nonetheless worked in support of the government's policies, whether intended or not, as tacit acceptance.

The 1940s and 1950s saw a reorganisation of the higher education scene in South Africa. A number of university colleges were accorded the status of fully-fledged universities, splitting off from the federal structure of the University of South Africa. One of these was the University of Natal, in 1949, with its first chancellor being Dennis G. Shepstone. The university college had produced publications in the name, 'Natal University College, Durban,' before a Publications Office was established, largely inaugural lectures of new professors as the institution became more established. It had also brought out the first volumes (1–13) of a large and important multi-disciplinary research project, the Natal Regional Survey, with Oxford University Press as publisher. Such publishing was, however, done in an ad hoc manner, and the need was clearly felt for a more systematic approach to scholarly publishing. One of the motivating factors behind the establishment of the Press was that it conferred a certain status on the university, "and also provided a readily available means for the publication of scholarly works by members of the academic staff."⁵³

The University of Natal Press was thus established in 1948, although the founding date is disputed in the sources. While the first meeting of the Publications Committee was held in 1948, and the first title was issued in 1949, some sources list the founding date as 1947: "In 1947 the Natal University College established its official press, which in due course became the University

51 Hutchings, 'Witwatersrand University Press.'

52 Correspondence, H.R. Raikes to OUP (1941), WUA.

53 University of Natal, Notes on Meetings of Academic Planning and Policy Committee (AP&PC), (Unpublished documents, 1972), UNA.

of Natal Press.”⁵⁴ Later internal documents tend to give the date as 1948, and the weight of evidence suggests this to be the correct date. The Press started life as a service department, a Publications Office, with the key task of supervising the university’s publications (including calendars, notices, brochures, etc., as well as the journal *Theoria*) and considering the publication “of work contributing to criticism, research and teaching by members of staff, advanced students and others.” It was also authorised “to make suitable arrangements for printing and distribution of each publication.”⁵⁵ Any publication produced under the auspices of the Publications Committee would bear “the imprint of the Natal University.”⁵⁶

The first meeting of the Publications Committee (which would later change its name to the Press Committee) was 25 March 1948, consisting of six members appointed by the Senate: Professors Burrows, Sydney Frank Bush, Alan Hattersley and G.S. Nienaber (the latter two, a historian and a linguist/literary scholar, would each serve several terms as Chairman right up until the late 1960s), as well as Dr Herbert Coblans (who was the first Librarian of the Natal University College) and Dr Bernard Notcutt. At the second meeting of the Committee, in October 1948, R. Stephens was appointed as Publications Officer, and £250 was allocated for publishing expenses. The earliest title to be published under the new imprint – listed on the title page as ‘*Universiteitspers, Natal*’ or ‘University Press, Natal’ – was *Die Duister Digter: Opstelle oor die Moderne Afrikaanse Liriek* (‘The Shadow Poet: Essays on Modern Afrikaans Lyric Poetry’) by A.P. Grové in 1949 (see Figure 3). The language of this text was atypical for this press, which would come to be characterised by English-language output, but its literary theme was a forerunner of many further works on literature. The essays collected in *Die Duister Digter* were considered of great value in teaching, and were described in publicity material as “penetrating and searching.”⁵⁷ The text was also widely reviewed in popular magazines such as *Standpunte* and *Die Huisgenoot*.

While a later Chairman of the Press Committee, the legal scholar John Milton, would argue that “[t]he Press was never founded in any formal way by the University,” because a staffing structure and constitution were not immediately established, the setting up of the Press Committee is in itself a formal

54 C.W. Abbott, ‘University of Natal Press: Forward Planning 1973–5’ (Unpublished report to the Press Committee, 10 April 1972), p. 1.

55 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (4 November 1987), UNA C84/2/1.

56 Ibid.

57 ‘University of Natal Press,’ *Theoria*, 4 (1952), p. 98.

DIE DUISTER DIGTER

OPSTELLE OOR DIE
MODERNE AFRIKAANSE LIRIEK

DEUR

A. P. GROVÉ



UNIVERSITEITSPERS, NATAL
PIETERMARITZBURG • DURBAN

1949

FIGURE 3 Title page of the first UNP book, 1949 (Reproduced with permission of UKZN Press)

acknowledgement of the initiation of a new publishing venture.⁵⁸ As at Wits, the character of those involved in the Press Committee shaped the emerging press. G.S. Nienaber, professor of Afrikaans at the University, was a founding member of the Press Committee, and served as Chairman for a long time. He retired from the chair in 1968, and, in an interesting turn of events, became one of the panel of censors on Jannie Kruger's board in 1971.⁵⁹ This evidence of his political affiliations is in contrast to other members of the Committee, like Colin Gardner, who was a member of the Liberal Party and later, in the 1990s, joined the African National Congress (ANC). Yet others, like Alan Hattersley, whose work focused on the British settlement of Natal, appear to have been as politically neutral as possible. The composition of the Press Committee was thus somewhat mixed in terms of political affiliation, and it would be difficult to attribute a generally accepted or consensus political ideology to the Press as a result. The publishing output is thus also mixed.

The books published in this early apartheid period by both WUP and UNP were largely liberal, by the standards of the day, or apolitical. Examples at WUP include works by W.G. Stafford in law, Leo Marquard in history, R.F.A. Hoernlé in philosophy, and I.D. MacCrone in psychology. UNP, in turn, published a number of works by liberal scholars such as Edgar Brookes and Hilda Kuper. Other important texts from UNP include socio-economic surveys, mostly in the Natal region, literary criticism, and medical textbooks, including one that became known as *Ellis's Anatomy*, and which is still in print and widely used today. The Natal Regional Survey series was originally published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the University, but the university press later took full responsibility for their production and dissemination. The books were attractively produced in blue hard cover, with black and white photographs on the dust jackets. The socio-economic surveys were intended to assist in the planning for the policy of separate development, in the sense of how towns, industries and rural areas needed planning for future developments, but they stopped short of explicitly either supporting or condemning apartheid.

But in spite of these significant contributions to knowledge production, the university presses were not well valued by their parent institutions, the universities. Staffing, for one thing, was always a problem. At WUP, it was only after a concerted campaign and increasing agitation from Percy Freer that the first full-time staff member was appointed, when Mrs S.E.H. Logie was hired as a temporary

58 Correspondence of J.R.L. Milton with Members of the Press Committee (15 March 1990), UNA, p. 1.

59 Peter McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

assistant in September 1947. The scope of her duties included correspondence and filing; sales; preparing copy for press; proof-reading; and advertising. Logie remained with the Press for just two years, a common pattern at that time as married women would often resign (or even be forced to do so) when they became pregnant. She was replaced by Mrs M.A. Hutchings, who would become an institution at WUP, remaining from 1950 until her retirement in 1969. With Freer retiring in 1953, the University appointed Elizabeth Hartmann to the position of Acting Librarian, and thus by default to the position of Publications Officer. In a sense, she would be the first female manager or 'Controller' of the press – and the first woman to be appointed University Librarian in South Africa. When, in 1954, a Treasury ruling permitted cost-of-living allowances for married women for the first time, Hutchings was appointed permanently to the position of Publications Officer. This created a certain amount of stability in the staffing of the Press, although the high turnover of temporary staff continued.

The staffing situation at Natal followed a similar pattern. For a time after its inception, the Press was administered by the Press Committee and operated under the auspices of the University Library. The first Publications Officer, Mr R. Stephens, served from 1948 until 1951, with the task of spending an hour every day "registering, numbering and display[ing]" periodicals in the Pietermaritzburg Library. His dismissal for an unspecified offence created a staffing gap, in the already understaffed Library.⁶⁰ This gap was filled when he was replaced by two temporary and part-time Publications Officers, Colin Gardner and Lindsay Young, academics from the departments of English and History respectively, serving in a part-time capacity. This was intended only as an ad hoc, temporary arrangement, although the Librarian, Mr H. Coblans, may have been premature in reporting that "[p]ublications work is thus no longer a library responsibility."⁶¹ In the event, the situation seems to have lasted throughout much of the 1950s, and Colin Gardner in particular remained involved with the Press throughout his tenure at the university.

The extant archives provide few details about the 1950s at UNP, and it seems that little progress was made in attempts to fill the position of Publications Officer. This uncertainty ended only when Dr William McConkey, a distinguished educationalist, was appointed Publications Officer and Secretary to the Press Committee in the early 1960s, a period when the Committee was handling increasing numbers of publications. McConkey had recently retired as Director

60 Nora Buchanan, 'A history of the University of Natal Libraries, 1910–2003' (DPhil thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008), p. 123.

61 University of Natal Library Annual Report (1951) quoted in Buchanan, 'A history of the University of Natal Libraries,' p. 123.

of Education in Natal, and strongly opposed the imposition of Bantu Education – the Press would later publish his critical study, *Bantu Education*, in 1972. He remained in the post until his retirement in 1969. An Editorial in the UNP journal *Theoria* paid tribute to McConkey:

Special tribute must be paid to Dr W.G. McConkey who has retired as Publications Officer after nine years in that position. Shepherding *Theoria* through the press formed only a section of his devoted work for the University of Natal, yet he made himself available to us at all times and attended with characteristic care and erudition to any problem on which he could offer advice. We wish to thank him for his unsparing interest. It is fitting that the first article in this issue should be his study of a crucial matter in Education at the present time.⁶²

In 1969, Mr R.A. Brown, the University Librarian at Pietermaritzburg since 1961, took on the duties of Acting Publications Officer. At this time, too, a permanent Secretary was appointed, in the person of Helen Cook. The Minutes of the Press Committee from this period also record the first (and only) reference to a black staff member: Mr F.J. Sitole, who passed away in 1972, after being with the Press for nine years. The Committee voted to send his wife their condolences and a small stipend.⁶³ As it is not stated what his role was, it may be speculated that Mr Sitole was a typesetter or parcel wrapper, job titles indicated on an organogram of that period.

Brown was a librarian by training, as well as a former school teacher, and had a great interest in publishing and cataloguing. During his short tenure, he was particularly active in visiting other university presses around the world (in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, in particular), in an attempt to place the press on a more professional footing. He continued to give advice to the press, usually from London, even after leaving the university. The end of Brown's tenure signalled the end of the close relationship between Library and Press, in the sense that the Press would no longer be run by Library staff, but by dedicated publishing staff.

Publishing in Pretoria

Unlike at Wits and Natal – and predating these efforts – an early attempt to found a university press at Unisa was unsuccessful. Boucher, in his official history

62 'Editorial,' *Theoria*, 32 (1969), p. 1.

63 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (17 August 1972), UNA DP 14/2/10.

of the university, notes that, "Unisa's early years (1920s) were spent trying to think of ways to encourage research and improve intellectual activity. An idea to create a university press had to be put aside as there was no additional money beyond the government subsidies to cover the activities of an administrative staff that started at twenty five in 1918 and grew with each successive year."⁶⁴ Later, although still before any form of internal publishing was contemplated, a fund was established to support publication. In 1932, a committee led by Advocate Roberts recommended to Council:

- (i) That a graduate bursary of £200 per year for three years be established, open only to graduates of the University of South Africa. This bursary will be known as the "Hiddingh-Currie Memorial Bursary" and the conditions of its award will be formulated by the Senate for approval by the Council.
- (ii) That a Hiddingh-Currie Research Fund of £100 per year be set aside to provide assistance to members of the University of South Africa, as described in Article 4 of Statute 1 (page 599 of the Calendar), in the publication of reports of original research work of scientific value.⁶⁵

The fund was created from a portion of the interest realised from the sale of the old University Buildings in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, "to be used for some approved University function such as the encouragement of research by special grants or scholarships." Dr William Hiddingh and Sir Donald Currie had each contributed £25 000 towards the University Buildings, but the money was no longer needed for this purpose when the University of the Cape of Good Hope became the University of South Africa, and the campus was moved to Pretoria. The publications fund was considered a fitting way to commemorate their names. Hiddingh was one of the first advocates in the Cape Colony and played an important role in the cultural life of the Cape, while Currie supported higher education in both the UK and South Africa (he is better known in South Africa for having donated the Currie Cup for rugby). A Publications Committee was finally established at Unisa in 1956, and in 1974, the Hiddingh-Currie Publications Fund was placed under the control of the Publications Committee.⁶⁶ Publications qualifying for the award would fall under the *Studia* series, and be judged in a similar way in terms of quality. And, in contrast to the

64 M. Boucher, *Spes in Arduis: A history of the University of South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1973).

65 Minutes of meetings of Unisa Council (23 September 1932), UPA, pp. 118, 119, my translation.

66 Minutes of meetings of Unisa Council (13 November 1974), UPA.

collaborative nature of the past, “[o]nly the University will publish works in this series from now on.”⁶⁷

The eventual founding of a Unisa publisher in 1956 was based on the initiative of a small group of lecturers who wanted to promote research as a focus alongside teaching at the University, and in this they were successful. From 1946, the University of South Africa was reorganised, with most of the constituent colleges becoming independent universities in their own right. The University was then given the role of ‘external’ or correspondence teaching. These early years in a new form saw a great deal of debate and controversy over the role and character of the University. For instance, there was debate over the place of research in an ‘external’ university. In April 1956, a new principal, Samuel Pauw, took office at Unisa. He spoke of “the university’s need to advertise itself,” and saw a role for a university press in this new strategic focus.⁶⁸ At the same time, a small group of lecturers began to meet on their own initiative. They helped to establish two committees: the Committee on Academic Initiatives, which was largely responsible for organising lectures, symposia and visiting lectureships, and the Publications Committee, which was set up to provide publishing channels for Unisa academics and students.

The first Publications Committee consisted of Professors W.A. Joubert, H.S. Steyn, G.W. Perold, F.A. van Jaarsveld, G. van N. Viljoen and J.L. Steyn, and Mr A.M. Davey.⁶⁹ The Committee felt that the Hiddingh-Currie series provided scope for wide-ranging (*omvangryke*) publications and that there were sufficient journals, but that a middle path was required.⁷⁰ They thus set up a publications series known as the Communications of the University of South Africa (*Mededelings van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika*), with publications differentiated according to three categories:

- A. Inaugural lectures
- B. Lectures and symposia
- C. Research work done by professors, lecturers and students.⁷¹

The first members of the Senate Publications Committee were all respected scholars, as a quick scan will illustrate: Willem Joubert was a legal scholar,

67 Minutes of the Senate Publications Committee / Publikasiekomitee (21 August 1975), p. 65, my translation.

68 Boucher, *Spes in Arduis*, p. 311.

69 F.A. van Jaarsveld, ‘Die werksaamhede van die Publikasiekomitee,’ *Unisa* (1961), p. 71.

70 F.E. Rädcl, ‘Innerlike uitbouing van universiteit deur publikasieereks,’ *Unisa* (1960), p. 67.

71 Boucher, *Spes in Arduis*; Rädcl, ‘Innerlike uitbouing.’

founder of legal journals and “prolific mentor of research;”⁷² H.S. Steyn was a statistician who founded the South African Statistical Association and later became Vice-Chancellor of Unisa; Guido Perold was professor of Organic Chemistry; Floors van Jaarsveld was a celebrated historian; Gerrit Viljoen lectured in classical languages, and would later become first rector of the Rand Afrikaans University and then a Government Minister; J.L. Steyn was professor in the Department of Afrikaans-Nederlands; and Arthur Davey, also a historian, was a young scholar in 1956, having just completed his MA, but was being mentored by C.F.J. Muller and Theo van Wijk. Most of these scholars would be published by Unisa, and the field of history became a very important part of the publishing list.

The first title published by the Publications Committee, in 1956, is fairly representative of the kind of publication produced in the early years: titled *Aristoteles en die Macedoniese Politiek* (‘Aristotle and Macedonian Politics’), by H.J. de Vleeschauwer, it was the short, Afrikaans-language text of an inaugural lecture by a Unisa professor and later a prominent member of the Committee, and focused on history, classics and politics – but not contemporary politics, by any means (see Figure 4).

It is indicative of the kind of texts that would come to be published by Unisa, that De Vleeschauwer was the first author. He was politically dubious, to say the least. While noted as an authority in his field, he was also a convicted Nazi collaborator in his home country of Belgium, who had fled to South Africa to avoid the death penalty (he was later pardoned). During his stay at Unisa from 1951 to 1966, he headed the Department of Philosophy from 1951 to 1964 and simultaneously the Department of Librarianship and Bibliography from 1955 to 1965. He even acted as head of the Department of Romance Languages for a short period. Archie Dick notes that he was “a towering academic who influenced and helped to shape the curricula of a number of academic disciplines in Unisa’s Faculty of Arts for several years.”⁷³ As for his political views, these were ardently nationalist and racist: “[h]e was instrumental in the first meetings of an Afrikaans Philosophy Association, whose membership was restricted to whites only, and he began his political commentary in the local Afrikaans newspapers soon after his arrival in South Africa, ardently advocating the nationalist cause.”⁷⁴ Whether or not Unisa endorsed his views, it is problematic

72 Edwin Cameron, ‘Lawyers, language and politics: In memory of J.C. de Wet and W.A. Joubert,’ *South Africa Law Journal*, 110 (1993), p. 51.

73 Archie L. Dick, ‘Scholarship, Identity and Lies: The political life of H.J. de Vleeschauwer, 1940–1955,’ *Kleio*, 34 (2002), p. 8.

74 Ibid., p. 23.

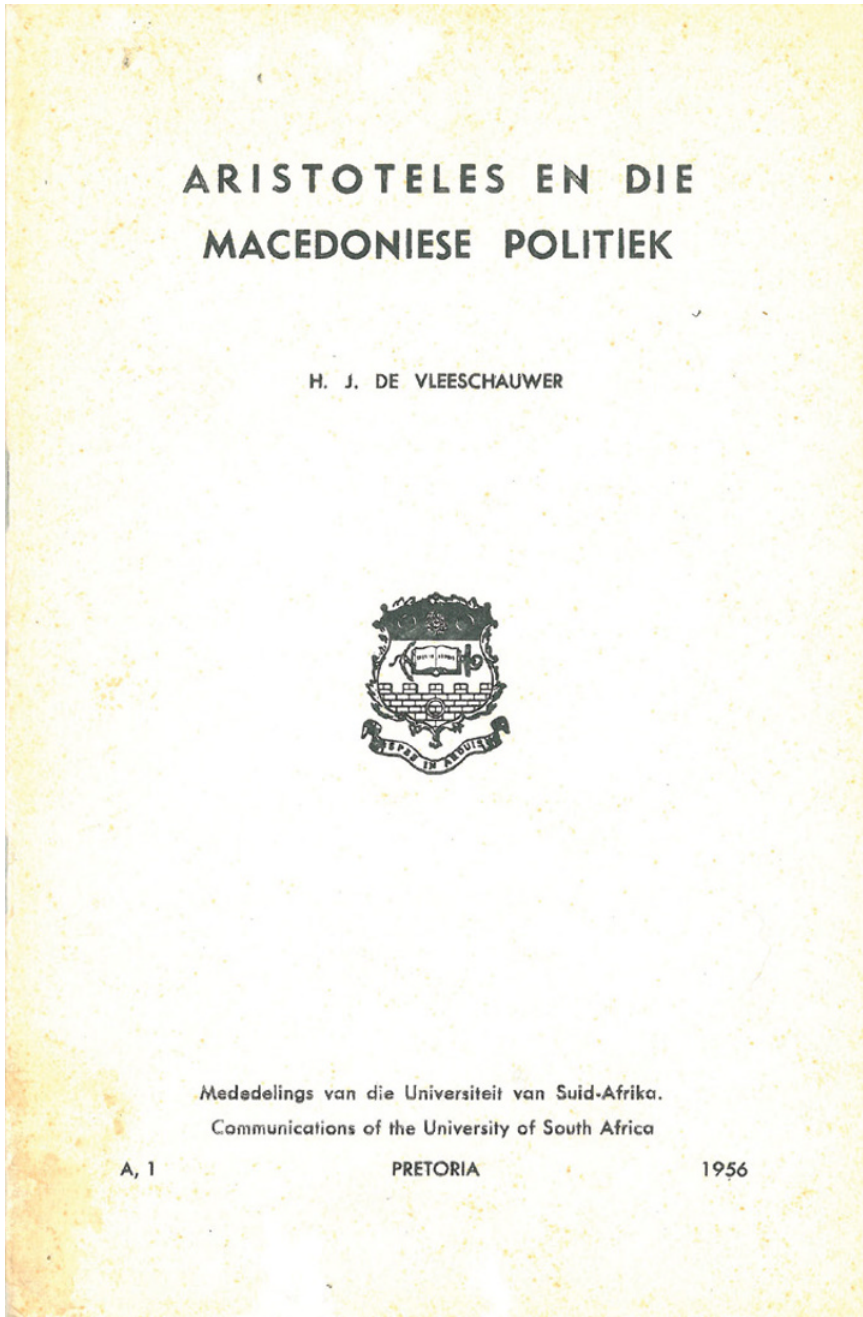


FIGURE 4 Title page of the first Unisa book, 1956 (Reproduced with permission of Unisa Press)

that this was the first author to be associated with their publishing programme, and an author who featured regularly in the publications catalogue.

The first substantial publication issued under the auspices of Unisa's Publications Committee was Dirk Ziervogel's *Swazi Texts* (1957), a linguistics monograph. Most of the early texts were under 100 pages until the mid-1960s, when history texts began to make a regular appearance.

In contrast to Wits and Natal, the Unisa Library assisted only in disseminating the publications of the nascent Press. A report from the 1960s refers to such activities: "The result of a campaign to increase the circulation of *Mededelings van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika* had disappointing results; only 1 193 were sold, 341 more than in 1964. *Mousaion* [a journal] fared better. Together with the textbook series, a total of 9 438 university publications were distributed, either through purchase, exchange, review or free issue."⁷⁵

Like the other presses, Unisa managed its publications programme without a full-time manager for some time. The publishing office was run on an ad hoc basis, largely by the head of the Publications Committee, for many years. With the success of the early publishing programme at Unisa, there was support for the notion of expanding the publishing services into a press. As late as the 1970s, a survey was conducted of international university presses, and it was recommended to the Unisa Council to redevelop the Department of Publishing Services (*Uitgewersdienste*) into a university press. The suggested model was, explicitly, that of Oxford University Press. Prof. H.S.P. Grässer, the chairman of the Publications Committee at the time (and right until the end of the 1980s), visited Oxford University Press in 1977 to "investigate the running of OUP and its relation to the University of Oxford, and to relate the findings to the publishing policy and practice of UNISA in general and the functioning of the Publications Committee in particular."⁷⁶ The new publishing house would report to a sub-committee of Senate, the Publications Committee, which was responsible for overseeing quality control and peer review.⁷⁷ These structures and policies have remained in place to this day. In general, in fact, procedures in terms of the Unisa Publications Committee have changed only marginally from the mid-1970s until the present day.

75 M-L. Suttie, 'The formative years of the University of South Africa Library, 1946 to 1976,' *Mousaion*, 23(1) (2005), p. 107.

76 H.S.P. Grässer, *Report on a visit to Oxford University Press, and resulting recommendations concerning the publishing policy and practice of the University of South Africa* (Unpublished Publications Committee document, 1977), UPA.

77 'Manifes oor die funksies van die Publikasiekomitee' (Unpublished report to the spc, 1976), UPA.

Why a University Press?

A question that arises when considering the origins of these university presses is why some universities set up university presses, and others not. Motivations for setting up a university press include enhancing the academic prestige of an institution, boosting the research reputation of a university, and providing a publishing outlet for academics. My hypothesis is that this is linked to the categorisation of universities, and to what they perceived as their roles and mandates, especially during the apartheid period. It is thus significant in terms of the publishing philosophies of the presses themselves, and how they may have perceived their own role.

The first category is that of Afrikaans universities, which, according to the literature, tended to have a more instrumentalist view of their mandate, rather than an idealistic one. In addition, a number of scholars have argued that research was not prioritised at such universities; rather, the focus was on teaching. See, for example the following description of the early years in the universities in South Africa:

Professors within South Africa did not have the facilities, equipment or the finance for their laboratories and rapidly became isolated from the great centres of research elsewhere in the world. They were overloaded with the tasks of teaching and administration at the universities, where the research culture had not yet penetrated. Conducting research was inopportune, tantamount to neglecting the more immediate tasks of organising, educating and managing.⁷⁸

This led to a suppressive effect on publishing generally, and certainly had a dampening effect on efforts to set up university presses. Unisa, which was exceptional in many ways as an Afrikaans-dominated university, did set up a university press, for reasons relating to the research needs of a specific group of academics. But outlets for the dissemination of research remained necessary.

For example, the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU, now the University of Johannesburg), while not establishing its own press, clearly saw the need to disseminate the research of its own faculty. It thus set up a publishing series in 1968, in partnership with a local publisher. The series was established to publish (a) inaugural lectures and other significant lectures, and (b) research by

⁷⁸ Johan Mouton et al., *Science in Africa at the Dawn of the 21st Century. Country Report: South Africa* (Paris: IRD and Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2001), pp. 15–16.

lecturers and students. The first title, a collection of essays by professors at the university, focused on *Universiteit en Onderrig* ('University and Tuition'). Prof. F.I.J. van Rensburg, the Chairman of the Tuition Committee at RAU, noted in a foreword to the first title the "generosity" of the Voortrekkerpers, which had agreed to publish the first academic title at no cost. He called this a "heartening example of cooperation between university and publisher" – clearly a different model to that of a university press.⁷⁹ (It could be noted here that Voortrekkerpers, as its name suggests, supported Afrikaans nationalism from the mid-1930s. It would later merge with Afrikaanse Pers to form Perskor.)

Stellenbosch University established a 'university press' much later, in the 2000s, a digital initiative called African Sun Media. The business model of this publisher is significantly different from the traditional university press model.

Similar to the Afrikaans universities, the black universities also tended to have an instrumentalist view and purpose. This militated against the creation of university presses, which are closely linked to a culture of research and publication, and to a certain prestige element. One of the continuing silences in the admittedly sparse literature on university presses in South Africa is the near-total exclusion of the University of Fort Hare Press. A few small references may be found, such as the following, fairly ambiguous one:

The name Tyhume soon changed to Lovedale and became the principal publishing house of Xhosa material. This primacy was reinforced when the South African Native College, now known as Fort Hare University, was established nearby in 1915. The classic association of a press with a University, so successful in Europe and elsewhere, ensured that both institutions flourished.⁸⁰

Lovedale was never a university press in the sense suggested by this comment. (Interestingly, though, Lovedale Press was a business enterprise, most of whose profits came from printing. The journal *Bantu Studies* was printed by the Lovedale Press for a number of years.) However, the close relationship between the university and the press does reveal an alternative publishing model for the dissemination of scholarly and research work. Even Fort Hare's own materials

79 P. van Zyl et al., *Universiteit en Onderrig* (Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers for Rand Afrikaans University, 1968), p. 9, my translation.

80 A.S.C. Hooper, 'History of the South African publishing and book trade,' in P.E. Westra and L.T. Jones (eds), *The Love of Books: Proceedings of the Seventh South African Conference of Bibliophiles* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1997), pp. 70–71.

speak of “[t]he lively publishing culture that characterised the University of Fort Hare and Lovedale Press in the 1930s and 1940s.”⁸¹

Even without taking Lovedale into account, the University published under the imprint of the “University of Fort Hare Press” from at least 1960 (the earliest text I have located thus far), and as the University College Fort Hare brought out the serial *Fort Hare Papers* from 1945. While never a prolific publisher, this sort of initiative needs to be recognised alongside the other, more established university presses. Fort Hare began its publishing programme just a year after it was formally constituted as a black homeland or bantustan institution. This was not intended as a subversive or oppositional exercise, but rather an attempt to provide a much-needed publication outlet for the researchers employed at the university. Publications include inaugural lectures and other special lectures, conference proceedings, as well as publications marking specific landmarks at Fort Hare. An example of the latter is a festschrift “on the occasion of the attainment of University status by the University College of Fort Hare.”

Unfortunately, further archival material regarding the origins of this press could not be located, and the decision was thus taken to exclude Fort Hare from the scope of this study. For this reason, it is difficult to speculate on the form and organisation of the press at that institution. The UFH Press may have been run by the Library, as it was closely associated in reports with the Library and Archives. When an attempt was made to revive the Press in 2008 by establishing a book publishing division at the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS), the Archivist and Director of NAHECS, Cornelius Thomas, was selected to oversee the process.⁸² To date, these efforts have been unsuccessful.

At the other black universities, no attempt was made to establish a press. Some of these universities have, inaccurately, labelled publications forthcoming from their institutions as products of a ‘university press,’ as may be seen in certain publications from the University of the Western Cape, for instance. But these are not in fact the products of an actual imprint.

The English-medium universities, in contrast, were set up in the image and model of the great English universities, and particularly Oxford and Cambridge: “The intellectual agendas of the four historically white English-medium universities were set by their perception that they were international institutions engaged in the same kinds of knowledge production as universities in, for example, Britain or the USA. This knowledge was not limited to instrumental

81 Govan Mbeki Research and Development Centre, ‘Update on reviving UFH Press,’ *Research and Postgraduate Bulletin*, 3 (2008), p. 11.

82 Ibid.

knowledge. The four universities believed that knowledge was a good in itself and hence that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was a major responsibility for any university."⁸³ Taylor agrees: "The devising of curricula, setting of examinations, methods of teaching, appointment of staff and the general philosophy of these institutions all bear the hallmark of Universities in Europe."⁸⁴

It would seem almost self-explanatory, then, that Witwatersrand and Natal Universities should set up presses. In fact, the question arises, why did UCT and Rhodes not set up presses? There was apparently interest in setting up presses at the other English-speaking institutions, with Rhodes and UCT writing (separately) to the Wits Registrar for information on the structure and viability of the Press. Rather than providing a model for other university presses, the Registrar's response was to propose collaboration with these universities, but this did not come to fruition.

Similarly, but on a broader scale, David Philip in 1971 suggested setting up a "Southern African Universities Press," a collaborative project between the 'open universities' of Cape Town, Rhodes, Natal and Wits. In a letter to the Wits Registrar dated 24 July 1971 (and similar letters were sent to the other universities mentioned), he set out his ideas thus:

It may seem surprising that I should be sending proposals for a universities press to the University of the Witwatersrand, which has its own university press. A reading of my memorandum as a whole, and especially paragraphs 3, 5 and 21, should make clear that my proposals are intended not to conflict with the existing university presses by (sic) to complement them by providing a unified promotion and marketing service, as well as an editorially supervised setting service.⁸⁵

The idea was to strengthen the commercial viability of South African academic publications, while also providing a publishing service for those universities without university presses. The universities, however, were wary and appeared not to perceive any clear benefits to the plan. In particular, they found the idea of being part of a profit-making publishing enterprise unsettling. Wits and Natal thus both responded, saying that they preferred to continue with their

83 Ian Bunting, 'The higher education landscape under apartheid,' in N. Cloete, R. Fehnel, P. Maassen, T. Moja, H. Perold and T. Gibbon (eds), *Transformation in Higher Education* (Cape Town: CHET and HSRC Press, 2002), p. 72.

84 Rupert Taylor, 'The narrow ground: Critical intellectual work on South Africa under apartheid,' *Critical Arts*, 5 (4) (1991), p. 34.

85 Correspondence, David Philip to the Wits Registrar (24 July 1971), WUA, p. 3.

own presses. With little positive response, David Philip went on to establish his own publishing house, successfully publishing serious non-fiction and academic writing, and making a name for himself as an oppositional publisher. Later, in the 1980s, David Philip Publishers would act as publicity agents for the University of Natal Press, but the relationship was limited.

One can only speculate that there may also have been financial reasons for this failure of certain institutions to establish presses in their own names, or that the universities felt their faculty were well served by existing arrangements. For a long time, UCT published in the name of the university alone, using external service providers. "During the 1980s there was discussion in various university forums about the need for an outlet for scholarly publishing by UCT academics from within the university."⁸⁶ But it was only in the early 1990s that UCT finally established a formal press, with UCT Press being developed in 1994. The driving force behind this was Martin Hall, then chair of the Board of the Centre for African Studies (CAS) at UCT, along with Rose Mény-Gibert, the director of the press, and Brian Warner, a professor in the Department of Astronomy who chaired the Publications Board. The business model was not that of a conventional university press, but rather a digital publishing initiative. Perhaps the local market was not ready for such a scholarly initiative, but in any case the university was disappointed that the press was not quickly self-sustaining. A fairly radical decision was thus made, to bring in a commercial publishing partner. One of South Africa's oldest publishers and an academic textbook specialist, Juta bought two-thirds of shares, and later took full control. The press is still driven by concerns for commercial sustainability, but it has managed to re-emerge after a period where very little was published.⁸⁷

Rhodes, on the other hand, entered into an arrangement with a commercial publisher (A.A. Balkema) to publish its Grahamstown series. In 1987, UNP was approached to take on this series, but declined, citing a lack of capacity. Mobbs Moberly of UNP noted that "[t]he approach is significant in that it emphasises how short this country is of publishers able to undertake specialist non-commercial publications."⁸⁸ WUP was then approached, and agreed to take on the series, although this took several years to come to fruition.⁸⁹

However, based on ISBN records and the holdings of the National Library of South Africa, all of the universities have pursued publications programmes to

86 Digby Sales, 'Pressing matters for UCT,' *Monday Paper*, 27(15) (2008).

87 Eve Gray and Michelle Willmers, *Case Study 4: UCT Press* (Cape Town: Opening Scholarship Project, Centre for Educational Technology, 2009).

88 M. Moberly, 'Publisher's Report' (Unpublished report, 16 March 1987), UNA, p. 8.

89 Correspondence, Dr H.C. Hummel to N. Wilson (2 February 1987), WUA.

some extent or another over the years. R.A. Brown, the University Librarian at Pietermaritzburg and the manager of UNP for a period, listed Natal and Witwatersrand as the only two university presses in South Africa in a report, but went on to note: "All the other universities produce publications of some sort (Annals, Communications, Publications) which usually consist of inaugural lectures, theses, or results of research. These are handled by their administrations, sometimes with the help of libraries."⁹⁰ (This ignoring of Unisa's press was common in reports from UNP and WUP.) Universities that have had ISBNs allocated, and therefore have followed some form of publishing programme over the years, include UCT (0-7992 and 1-919713), Rhodes (0-86810), Free State (0-86886), RAU (0-86970), Pretoria (0-86979 and 1-86854), North (0-86980, 1-86840, 1-874897 and 1-9583158), UPE (0-86988), Potchefstroom (0-86990 and 1-86822), Stellenbosch (0-86995), Johannesburg Technikon (0-947048), Durban-Westville (0-947445), Medunsa (0-9583100), Vaal Triangle Tech (0-9584095), Western Cape (1-86808), Zululand (1-86818), and Vista (1-86828). These publication series produced theses and dissertations, occasional conference proceedings, and speeches from prominent university occasions, such as graduation ceremonies, but not scholarly books.

It is occasionally confusing to examine the bibliographic details of some of the books published by universities without presses. The reason is that they list the publisher as the "university press" of a particular institution, even where no such formal arrangement existed. For instance, the sociologist S.P. Cilliers' 1971 work, *Appeal to Reason*, is listed as having been published by "University Publishers and Booksellers" at Stellenbosch. These inaccuracies can make it difficult to identify which universities established formal publishing houses (university presses), and which had occasional publishing programmes.

Conclusion

The specific models employed by South Africa's university presses are of particular interest in examining relations between the centre and the periphery, and between knowledge produced, packaged and disseminated in the South and in the North. In this regard, South Africa's university presses must be situated within the wider context of scholarly publishing in a post-colonial and specifically African situation. The model that emerges of the 'typical' South African university press is somewhat complicated by the different situations

⁹⁰ R.A. Brown, 'University of Natal Press: Memorandum on present situation and future developments' (Unpublished memorandum, 25 June 1970), UNA, p. 2.

and positioning of the different universities that established presses: two (three, if one counts UCT Press) at traditionally English-speaking, liberal, white universities; one university reserved for black students (Fort Hare); and one predominantly Afrikaner university that nonetheless was open to all population groups because of its focus on distance education (Unisa). Given this complexity, it would be difficult to assess whether a “common culture of academic publishing” has emerged, or whether the model has adapted and evolved to fit different contexts and situations.⁹¹

The university presses were established at significant moments in the history of the country and of their parent institutions. WUP was established at the same time as the university adopted the name of University of the Witwatersrand, formally putting an end to debates as to whether a university should be established in Johannesburg. This period, just a decade after the Union of South Africa had been established and almost immediately in the wake of the First World War, signalled an expansion of the university sector in South Africa, and a growing emphasis on the local or national relevance of research.⁹² The need for local publication outlets for both emerging and internationally recognised researchers was acknowledged, and was fulfilled by the creation of WUP at one of the country’s most research-intensive institutions. Revealing the similar trajectory of higher education development across the former British colonies, Wits established its university press in the same year, 1922, as the first Australian university press was set up in Melbourne.

The University of Natal Press also came into being as its parent institution received its own statute as an independent university, in the late 1940s. The new Principal, Dr E.G. Malherbe, officially assumed duty in April 1945. Malherbe immediately initiated the pursuit of independent university status for the College, and sought to promote the research mandate of the institution. The dissemination of research goes hand in hand with the function of a university press, and so UNP was born. By coincidence, the establishment of this university press coincided with the coming to power of the National Party.

Unisa started publishing in 1956, with a new Principal and in a context of debate over the future direction of the institution: as part of the government’s policy of extending apartheid throughout the education system, Unisa’s constituent parts had been broken off to become independent institutions of higher learning in their own right, and the remaining body was tasked with focusing on distance education – potentially at the expense of research. However, at the initiative of a group of research-minded professors, a publishing

91 Derricourt, *An Author’s Guide*, p. 6.

92 Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge*.

programme was established and, as the years progressed, “Unisa [became] intent upon imitating state-sponsored initiatives and building an acceptable research capacity that could promote its reputation in fields that enjoyed government approval.”⁹³

The mandates of the newly formed university presses were broadly similar. The common elements that emerge from the mission statements of the newly formed publishing committees may be summarised as follows:

- A close relationship with the parent institutions, often reflected in a service mandate;
- A commitment to excellence, and the use of peer review to maintain standards;
- An initial non-profit model, with a university subsidy;
- Little attempt at list-building, beyond support for the research strengths of the institution.

These points – especially the first three – recall the generic elements that make up the ‘Oxford model’ of university press publishing. Deviating from the Oxford model at first, the presses largely began life as publishing divisions within the university, rather than self-standing departments of the university. Their evolution over the years into fully-fledged publishing houses is similar to the trajectory followed by a number of university presses in other countries as well. One example is the still small Canterbury University Press in New Zealand, which was established as a “publications committee” in 1964, but has since developed into a “full-time publisher” since 1991.⁹⁴

Like the independent oppositional publishers, a university press is mission-driven, rather than profit-driven. This echoes Bourdieu’s sub-division of the field of cultural production into the field of restricted production (dominated by the pursuit of symbolic capital, or the recognition of the symbolic value of its product) and the field of large-scale production (dominated by the quest for economic profit).⁹⁵ University presses clearly operate within a field of restricted production and aim at the quest for symbolic capital. However, the mission in the case of the university presses is related to academic merit and prestige, rather than directly to political change as for the oppositional publishers – as may be seen in the founding missions of the South African university presses.

93 Suttie, ‘The formative years,’ p. 112.

94 Canterbury University Press, ‘About us’ (2009), Available online: <<http://www.cup.canterbury.ac.nz>>.

95 Bourdieu, ‘The market of symbolic goods.’

The university presses, in this way, share a close affiliation with their parent institutions, the universities.

It could be said that, like any publisher, the university presses have developed particular reputations – accumulated cultural and symbolic capital, to use Bourdieu's terms – as a result of their publishing lists. For instance, they have conferred prestige on their parent universities by publishing the work of distinguished academics and by bringing out award-winning scholarly books. The reputation of both individual titles and authors, and the overall 'brand' of the university press as the result of the accumulation of such titles and authors, have affected the acquisition of cultural distinction. The selection of these titles is influenced by a great many individuals and institutions, including the editorial staff of the press, the members of the Publications Committee or other advisors, and the academics used for the purposes of peer review.

Between Survival and Scholarship: Publishing Lists and the Continuum Model

Myths and Misperceptions

Ebewo states that, “[s]ince its inception in 1922, WUP has been able to publish only 102 titles – barely one volume per year. This paucity of production is equally true for other such presses.”¹ Murray describes the same publisher as “a small, under-funded operation,” which was “none the less responsible for a series of important publications” although it was “mainly concerned to publish works by members of the Wits staff.”² Yet the reality is different: the bibliography compiled for WUP as background for this study lists nearly 2 000 individual items (not counting reprints and new editions of previously published work) between 1922 and 2000. Moreover, these bibliographies list around 800 items for UNP, 750 items for Unisa Press, and more than a hundred for UCT Press. Even Fort Hare published over 100 items in its erratic existence. The misperception that the scholarly output was so low may be due to a confusion between titles published and titles still in print, or it may be attributed to the distribution and readership of university press titles.

In his study of African university presses, Darko-Ampem made some attempt to gauge the extent of publications per year from the university presses he surveyed, with the following conclusions: “[WUP] publishes on average 16 titles per year, has 159 titles in print, and a list ranging from the purely scholarly to the intelligently popular, encompassing history, theatre, physical anthropology, business studies and art.”³ These numbers are relatively accurate. But the figures cited for Unisa Press are not accurate, as that press certainly did not publish an average of 68 new titles a year.⁴ The figures provided by Unisa Press probably included all categories of publications produced, including service publications

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- 1 Patrick Ebewo, ‘The University Press and Scholarly Publishing in South Africa’ in S. Ngobeni (ed.), *Scholarly Publishing in Africa: Opportunities and impediments* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2010), p. 30.
 - 2 B. Murray, *Wits: The ‘open’ years* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), p. 166.
 - 3 K.O. Darko-Ampem, ‘Scholarly Publishing in Africa: A case study of the policies and practices of African university presses’ (DPhil dissertation, University of Stirling, 2003), p. 128.
 - 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 164.

such as readers and casebooks, but these are not original scholarly books and should not be counted as such. These shortcomings reveal the weakness of relying on the notoriously inaccurate record-keeping of the presses themselves.

There are similar misperceptions around the quality and subject matter of the publications. C.W. Abbott, while Chairman of the UNP Publications Committee, stated that “over the years it [UNP] had published a few very worthwhile books and some useless ones,” although – reassuringly? – he believed “the former outweighed the latter.”⁵ Darko-Ampem also considered the areas of specialisation at the presses, noting that Unisa Press published “mainly textbooks, readers, journals and works of general scholarly interest. Its journals are in the areas of communication science, education, political science, development administration, music, law, art and fine arts, English studies, information science and psychology.”⁶ As will be seen, these may be the subject areas of certain journals, but are not the most prolific areas for publishing books. Moreover, Gray describes the perception that “[t]he University of South Africa Press published little besides distance education materials for its own students.”⁷ Again, the bibliography reveals a different truth: that the university press in fact published little that was intended for students, and focused largely on journals, inaugural lectures, and a number of scholarly texts, although a small number of textbooks was produced. The misconception in this case may be due to the prevalent tendency to conflate the publishing and the printing function of Unisa, although these have always remained separate departments with differing aims and missions.

Another widely held belief is that the South African university presses were anti-apartheid. David Philip, for instance, contends that:

Much oppositional publishing has emanated from the various university presses and university institutes, in varying degrees of commitment to opposition. Although their main concerns are the advancement of scholarship and of research in a wide range of academic disciplines, the university presses of Wits University and of Natal have contributed strongly to oppositional publishing...⁸

5 University of Natal, Notes on Meetings of Academic Planning and Policy Committee (AP&PC), (Unpublished documents, 1972), UNA.

6 Darko-Ampem, ‘Scholarly Publishing in Africa,’ p. 128.

7 Eve Gray, ‘Academic Publishing in South Africa,’ in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 177.

8 David Philip, ‘Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,’ in *Book Publishing in South Africa for the 1990s. Proceedings of a Symposium Held in the South African Library, Cape Town, 22–25 November, 1989* (Cape Town: National Library of South Africa, 1991), p. 17.

Similarly, Davey comments that “Skotaville, COSAW [Congress of South African Writers], Ravan Press, David Philip Publishers, the university presses, Lovedale Press, Taurus, the African Writers’ Association, all had the bravery and smarts to turn secrecy and suppression on its head.”⁹ And, in paying tribute to David Philip, Malcolm Hacksley notes that “publishers like DPP [David Philip Publishers] and Ravan Press, and later also Skotaville, Seriti sa Sechaba and the university presses at Wits and Natal succeeded in helping to keep intellectual debate alive and in promoting an awareness of alternative ideas.”¹⁰

Wits University Press, in particular, is often associated in the literature with oppositional publishing. This is partly due to the university’s own reputation for promoting academic freedom. The production of such pamphlets as *The Open Universities* (1957) is, at least in part, responsible for this reputation. Student and academic activism is another aspect. In its own records, WUP promoted this image: “The Press, over the years, had built up an enormous trust and confidence, particularly among the black population, because of the type of work it produced.”¹¹ Another document looks to the future: “Post-apartheid, the Press would enjoy full credibility. It already had a reputation in the black community for publishing on merit.”¹²

Gray, in contrast, argues that:

...during the darkest years of apartheid, through the 70s and 80s, WUP failed to provide a voice for its radical academics, the vociferous opponents of apartheid. This failure was common, in varying degrees, to other university presses also. ... And so the mantle of serious academic publishing fell on small, oppositional trade publishers – David Philips (sic), Ravan and Ad Donker.¹³

There are thus a variety of perceptions of the South African university presses during the apartheid period. But how do these notions stand up to the actual, empirical evidence of the publishing output of the university presses? This chapter will focus on answering this question. This perspective, based on real publishing lists, provides a concrete underpinning to perceptions of the activities of

9 Maggie Davey, ‘Who Killed Dulcie September?’, *African Studies*, 69(1) (2010), p. 181.

10 Malcolm Hacksley, ‘An Oppositional Publisher under a Repressive Regime: David Philip’s role in the struggle for books,’ Paper presented at ‘A World Elsewhere’ conference (Cape Town, 2007).

11 ‘Review of WUP’ (Unpublished archival report, 1987), WUA S87/415, p. 1.

12 Minutes of Senate (Unpublished minutes, 15 June 1987), WUA S87/956, p. 19.

13 Gray, ‘Academic Publishing in South Africa,’ p. 176.

intellectuals and publishers during this era. Moreover, an examination of both knowledge production and intellectual responses supports Peter Burke's argument that "the political history of knowledge may be viewed as a conflict between two principles, transparency versus opacity, the balance of these forces varying with regions and periods."¹⁴ Attention will focus on the ideological attitudes and values transmitted by university presses as knowledge producers.

The Continuum Model

The case of Oxford University Press in South Africa is an interesting illustration of shifts along the continuum model developed for this study (see Chapter 1). As Caroline Davis shows, the press went through a period where it balanced its list between academic publications, which were often oppositional, and educational textbooks, largely for the Bantu Education market.¹⁵ Under the direction of Leo Marquard, a Liberal Party stalwart, after 1946 a tradition of anti-apartheid publishing was established. David Philip lists key texts from this period as Alan Paton's *Hofmeyr*, Edgar Brookes's *Civil Liberty in South Africa*, Monica Wilson's *Langa*, Desmond Hobart Houghton's *The South African Economy*, T.R.H. Davenport's *The Afrikaner Bond*, David Welsh's *The Roots of Segregation*, and Marquard's own *Peoples and Policies of South Africa*.¹⁶ OUP supported this clearly liberal publishing programme through educational publishing, in particular textbooks for black schools. As Davis points out, this cross-subsidisation led to an interesting contradiction in policy, between opposing the Nationalist government on the one hand, and supporting their segregated education system on the other. She describes the example of Bantu Education being "directly attacked in a publication that Marquard and Philip themselves commissioned and edited, Mary Benson's 1963 biography of Albert Luthuli."¹⁷

Davis also describes how OUP became less oppositional over time, especially as the 1960s progressed. After Marquard's retirement in 1962, the impetus for oppositional publishing lessened while at the same time the government became more repressive. Under the more repressive legislative environment,

14 Peter Burke, 'A social history of knowledge revisited,' *Modern Intellectual History*, 4 (2007), p. 532.

15 Caroline Davis, 'Histories of publishing under apartheid: Oxford University Press in South Africa,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37(1) (2011), pp. 79–98.

16 Philip, 'Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,' p. 11.

17 Davis, 'Histories of publishing under apartheid,' p. 86.

OUP not only became less critical, but it also resorted to self-censorship. In a case which had a clear influence on the South African university presses, the *Oxford History of South Africa* was published in 1971. Leo Kuper's chapter on 'African nationalism in South Africa, 1910–1964,' given its theme and focus, unavoidably quoted many banned people and publications, and OUP feared the book being banned as a result. Merrett summarises that "[t]wo years' work on primary sources resulted in infringements of the law regarding the quoting of banned persons and unlawful organisations, an inevitable consequence given the topic."¹⁸ The publishers' decision was to print two separate editions: while the international edition included the chapter by Kuper on African nationalism, the local edition contained 53 blank pages where his chapter should have been.

This decision was strongly criticised, not least from Kuper himself. He accused the publishers of acting in "the self-appointed role of surrogate censor" and of "committing an act of political regression," going on to argue that:

Such fears may be aroused that the self-censorship goes well beyond the strict requirements of the law. Often this self-censorship is not disclosed to the reader. The third stage is the enforcement of the censorship laws against writers by persons acting on their own initiative and not charged with that function by the government. It is a surrogate censorship which enormously increases the effectiveness of repression. It was this step which the Clarendon Press and the editors initially took in excluding my chapter.¹⁹

This is a significant criticism, especially given Kuper's standing as "probably the finest sociologist to have emerged from the South African milieu."²⁰ Amidst much criticism, in a final irony, the publishers were later informed that the book would not be banned in its uncensored version:

The book, whose international edition included the missing chapter, was never banned. This was not required as the publishers had achieved the state's purpose through a blatant act of self-censorship. The South African edition contained a note of regret, but a statement by Kuper was not

¹⁸ C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip and University of Natal Press, 1994), p. 62.

¹⁹ Leo Kuper, 'Censorship by proxy,' *Index on Censorship* (September 1975), p. 50.

²⁰ Henry Lever, 'Sociology of South Africa: Supplementary Comments,' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 7 (1981), p. 255.

included. It was, however, published in the international edition after 'protracted and painful correspondence' initiated by Kuper. A representative of the PCB, in explaining his body's lack of involvement in the blank pages saga, said he found them so irritating he wished he could ban the book.²¹

Some saw the decision as a courageous one, drawing attention as it did to the issue of censorship in South Africa, and opening up some debate on the matter. For example:

This [the OUP] episode starkly brings out the existence of self-censorship and several social scientists I have spoken to admit to having engaged in this practice. ... The testimony to the power of ideological control ultimately lies in the field of unconscious self-censorship: much of what could be termed the sociological imagination originates from the sub-conscious and ideas formulated there may be unconsciously suppressed by self-protective mechanisms.²²

David Philip, who was then a publisher at OUP and involved in the decision to publish the blank pages, situates the decision within the highly repressive political context and the threat of punishment. He explains that "[t]he supporters of the publish-and-be-damned argument were mainly outside South Africa; those in favour of publishing with the offending chapter blank were mainly inside the country. Who was right? I am sure only that it was a terribly difficult decision at the time."²³ Ravan Press chose a similar strategy when publishing the words of certain banned persons. This reveals the limited extent of dissent possible within the country at the time.

The lasting result of the *Oxford History* debacle was a withdrawal, on the part of the publisher, from politically oriented publishing. "By 1971, the parent OUP in England, evidently fearing for the safety and profitability of their South African enterprise, ordered the latter to withdraw from publishing texts on local history and politics and to concentrate instead on increasing the company's share of the growing market for books for African primary schools: in effect, self-imposed censorship, in accordance with the hardening apartheid

²¹ Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, pp. 62–63.

²² Michael Savage, 'Constraints on research in sociology and social psychology,' in J. Rex (ed.), *Apartheid and Social Research* (Paris: Unesco, 1981), p. 58.

²³ Philip, 'Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,' p. 43.

ideology of the time.”²⁴ Other commentators draw similar conclusions: “For nearly the next twenty years – the years of dominance of the apartheid state – Oxford University Press Southern Africa would no longer be regarded as oppositional publishers. They followed Longman into the African school market and concentrated again on being distributors of imported books.”²⁵

In consequence of OUP’s decision to move away from critical academic work and towards educational publishing, in 1971, David Philip left Oxford University Press in Cape Town to set up as an independent publisher. “Rather than allow the expression of alternative views to be silenced in this way, and believing in ‘the truth of the imagination,’ David Philip cashed in his pension and, operating together with his wife Marie, launched David Philip Publishers. Their aim was to publish ‘Books That Matter for Southern Africa,’ as their slogan emphasised, by which they meant “academic books and serious trade books for the thinking public.”²⁶ Oppositional publishing would henceforth largely be undertaken by independent publishers, outside of the academic sphere.

If we were to plot the position of OUP on the continuum model (Figure 1), then it would clearly show a shift over time: from the relatively oppositional category of political reform, to liberal retreat, to self-censorship and privatism. But there were also multiple positions occupied at a single time. To apply the continuum to the publishing output of the South African university presses, a content analysis was performed. This analysis was conducted of the whole sample of publications produced under the auspices of the core university presses (Wits, Natal and Unisa), within the apartheid period (1960–1990). It was important not to approach this content analysis in an overly simplistic way. There are many nuances in terms of how people reacted to apartheid, as well as ambiguities, contradictions and shifts over time. For instance, it is clearly incorrect to equate scholarly publishing in Afrikaans with support for apartheid, or publishing in English with liberal or oppositional publishing. However, it remains true that the general tendencies did run in these directions: the university presses that published more in English (Wits and Natal) did tend to publish more liberal work, while the press that published to a greater extent in Afrikaans (Unisa) did tend to publish more conservative work, overall. Equally, it is overly simplistic to assume that any publication dealing with ‘black’ or ‘white’ issues is concerned with race relations and is

²⁴ Hacksley, ‘An Oppositional Publisher.’

²⁵ Philip Altbach and Edith Hoshino, *International Book Publishing: An Encyclopaedia* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 418.

²⁶ Hacksley, ‘An Oppositional Publisher.’

progressive; as will be shown, there was widespread usage of the apartheid race classifications, and not necessarily with any accompanying criticism of these categories. This analysis thus attempts both to sketch broad trends and tendencies, and to point out individual cases that may have stood out from the norm.

The 'Open' Universities and Liberal Retreat

In spite of examples of activism and resistance, and overt support for academic freedom, the universities have received severe criticism since the end of apartheid for their perceived compromises and complicity. For example, the position espoused by *The Open Universities in South Africa* has been criticised for not going far enough; both Wits and UCT were castigated for compliantly accepting segregated admissions and for not promoting academic freedom to a greater extent. Some scholars refer to their support for academic freedom as “ritualised liberalism” or even “standardized liberal opposition to apartheid,” neither of which “involved a call for fundamental structural change.”²⁷ A large body of research supports this view: Moulder notes that during apartheid the English-medium universities were criticised from the right for protesting against the state’s contraventions of their university autonomy; but they were also criticised from the left for not protesting against many other state contraventions of human freedoms.²⁸ The universities are thus seen as being guilty of “collusion and acquiescence, not only to the government, but to the general prejudices of white society, which they reflected. The English liberal tradition, as well as the criticism of and resistance to apartheid that emanated from English-medium campuses, are useful smokescreens to hide behind.”²⁹ Similarly, Asmal argues that the “majority of academics at higher education institutions quietly worked the apartheid system without questioning its premise, turning a blind eye to its injustices.”³⁰ This subject position fits with the continuum’s categories of negotiated neutrality.

27 Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 198; C. Merrett, *State Censorship and the Academic Process in South Africa*, Occasional Paper 192 (University of Illinois, 1991), p. 7.

28 Moulder, quoted in Y. Taylor and R. Taylor, ‘Academic freedom and racial injustice: South Africa’s former “open universities,”’ *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 24(6) (2010), p. 900.

29 Sean Greyling, ‘Rhodes University during the Segregation and Apartheid Eras, 1933 to 1990’ (MA dissertation, Rhodes University, 2007), p. 172.

30 Kader Asmal, ‘Thinking freedom: Breaking with the past, planning for the future,’ *Pretexts*, 11(2) (2002), p. 160.

Moreover, all of the university presses fulfilled their mission by publishing scholarly work that was entirely apolitical and in no way commented on apartheid – whether positively or negatively. For example, field guides such as *Trees and Shrubs of the Witwatersrand* (WUP, 1964), *The Frogs of South Africa* (WUP, 1979), *Aids to Bird Identification* (UNP, 1981) and the English-Zulu dictionary sold very well, as did textbooks like *Man's Anatomy: A Study in Dissection* (WUP, 1963). Other books prescribed for students also tended to sell well, such as the “regularised text” of *Sir Gawain and the Grene Gome* (1960) and *Digters uit die Lae Lande: An Anthology of Modern Netherlands Poets* (‘Poets from the Low Countries,’ 1963). The latter text continued to be reprinted well into the 1990s. Significant scholarly texts such as *A History of Natal* (1965) and *A Guide to the Official Records of the Colony of Natal, 1843–1910* (1965) went through numerous reprints and new editions, reflecting ongoing demand and good sales. Significantly, none of these top sellers was political in tone, suggesting that the core market was scholarly or academic, but not politically minded.

This chapter does not dwell on such studies, but such work, the ‘bread and butter’ of the publishing list of any university press, must also be considered from the perspective of how it contributed (or not) to the ideal of a responsible academic. The notion that any scholarly work may be considered divorced from its wider political and social environment is a false one. As a result, for the purposes of this content analysis, such work may be considered apolitical, non-controversial scholarship, and may largely be classified under the category of privatism, or the negotiated code of apparent neutrality.

The presses’ early titles could be placed in a political but not highly politicised category – largely what Adam characterises as ‘liberal retreat.’³¹ Several examples of apparently neutral, ‘objective’ scientific research may be found in the publishing lists. There is a strong preoccupation with race and race relations, along with a general acceptance and use of the apartheid categories of classification, such as ‘Bantu,’ ‘the African,’ ‘Coloured’ and so on, as well as both ‘Bantustan’ and ‘homeland’ – the separate areas reserved for black inhabitants under separate development. The lists do reveal a gradual shift in terminology from ‘Bantu,’ to ‘African,’ to ‘Black’ (from the 1970s). There is also a shift evident from the term ‘Hottentot’ (now considered pejorative) to ‘Khoisan,’ during the course of the 1970s. Not all of these publications may be considered political in the sense of commenting on or critiquing current government policies, but some nonetheless drew attention to ongoing matters of race relations and the

31 Heribert Adam, ‘Predicaments and opinions of critical intellectuals at South African Universities,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip), 1977.

“black problem” or “native problem,” as it was often known. Some titles also assume a paternalistic tone, as in *A Handbook to Aid in the Treatment of Zulu Patients* (UNP, 1958). These are not necessarily an example of ‘privatism,’ but can also be seen as ‘change through association’ or ‘liberal retreat.’

To cite one example, UNP published the PhD thesis of Basil Jones, a Senior Lecturer in Surveying, in 1965. The study, titled *Land Tenure in South Africa: Past, present and future*, examines “the apportionment, tenure, registration and survey of land in Southern Africa” and proposes the establishment of a cadastral system for the “Bantu areas of South Africa” (according to the back cover blurb). Jones is entirely uncritical of, for instance, the Native Land Act (1913), although he describes its features in some detail. He notes the implications of the Act: “The Natives Land Act and the Native Land and Trust Act had the effect of setting definite limits to the Bantu areas,” and argues that one of the consequences is that “it will become necessary to remove a large portion of the rural [Bantu] population to urban areas where provision must be made for the establishment and development of residential townships and small holdings.”³² Such a study echoes Rogerson and Parnell’s criticism of research that ignores “the racial partitioning of South African space” and “the political manipulation of space.”³³ It also stands in marked contrast to Colin Tatz’s study of land and franchise policies, published just a few years before (UNP, 1962). Thus seeming neutrality may work in support of the government’s policies, whether intended or not, by coming across as tacit acceptance.

Both WUP and UNP had a strong list of liberal publications from early on, although this became less visible in the 1960s and 1970s, as South African politics became more polarised and the position of liberalism generally weakened. The influential historical text, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937* by J.M. Marais (WUP, 1957) illustrates the liberal inclination. This work, a study of white policy towards coloured people, was originally published by Longmans, but loss of stock during World War II led them to seek a co-publisher for a reprint. A contemporary review reveals Marais’ liberal credentials, which appear to have been well-known internationally:

The fact that Dr. Marais was born at the Paarl is a reminder that the predominantly Afrikaner (sic) western districts of the Cape have produced some of the staunchest opponents of the official segregation policy. True,

32 B.M. Jones, ‘Customary and statutory tenures and emerging land patterns in the Bantu areas of South Africa,’ *Theoria*, 23 (1964), p. 73.

33 C.M. Rogerson and S.M. Parnell, ‘Fostered by the Laager: Apartheid Human Geography in the 1980s,’ *Area*, 21(1) (1989), pp. 13–26), p. 16.

the author does not set out either to praise or to blame that policy; but his insistence that justice “does not allow the use of two measures, one for ourselves..., and another for those who differ from us in nationality, or race, or the colour of their skins,” and, still more, the conclusions which he draws from the facts accumulated during nine years of devoted labour, show clearly enough that he has no love for it.³⁴

A more recent description of Marais’ work calls it “committed scholarship.”³⁵

A slightly different example is MacCrone’s classic study, *Race Attitudes in South Africa*, which also came out in a WUP edition in 1957, although the original dates back to 1937. OUP published the original edition because the Publications Committee initially took some time to make up its mind on publishing the work, fretting about “whether it is likely to harm the University by exacerbating racial feeling.”³⁶ This work has frequently been described as “pioneering,” but, while it advanced an understanding of racial prejudice, it also presupposed that the white race was more advanced than other races.³⁷ Ally et al. point out that this form of liberalism was “decidedly opposed to racialism,” but that it was “underpinned by paternalism.”³⁸ The publication of such works reveals that WUP and its Publications Committee wanted to be associated with some of the university’s most influential scholars, although they were wary of their liberal political stance. Dubow notes that the “English-speaking establishment and its institutions were in reality often highly conservative during the apartheid era.”³⁹

A publication from the 1960s illustrates some of the contradictions inherent in the liberal position. In 1964, Gordon Lawrie, Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, published a commentary on the Odendaal Report, titled *New Light on South West Africa*, at first in the journal *African Studies* and then as a stand-alone research report through WUP. The Odendaal

34 Eric Walker, ‘Review of The Cape Coloured People, 1652–1937 by J.S. Marais,’ *English Historical Review*, 55(218) (1940), p. 323.

35 Susan Newton-King, *Masters and Servants on the Cape Eastern Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

36 Minutes of the Publications Committee (4 June 1936), WUA.

37 David Yudelman, ‘Industrialization, Race Relations and Change in South Africa: An Ideological and Academic Debate,’ *African Affairs*, 74(294) (1975), p. 86.

38 Shireen Ally, Katie Mooney and Paul Stewart, ‘The state-sponsored and centralised institutionalisation of an academic discipline: Sociology in South Africa, 1920–1970,’ *Society in Transition*, 34(1) (2003), p. 79.

39 Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, sensibility and white South Africa 1820–2000* (Oxford: OUP and Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006), p. 10.

Commission was set up to examine the situation of South West Africa (now Namibia), a territory falling under South African governance at the time. The report recommended the extension of the policy of homelands for each of the population groups; “it argues,” according to Lawrie’s summary, “that the provision of homelands for the different ethnic groups is the best, if not the only, way to ensure harmonious development.”⁴⁰ Lawrie points out the implications of such a policy in some detail, but in carefully neutral language throughout. Focusing on the economic rather than political implications, he concludes: “The Report *for all its merits* seems at times to have forgotten the realities of the harsh and barren land that is South West Africa.”⁴¹ Yet, while Lawrie was clearly aware of potential criticism of the report, as he included a section on the “International Setting of the Report,” and its reception in circles such as the United Nations, he himself was careful to remain as neutral as possible and to offer no overt criticism. This liberal ‘balancing act’ can be seen as a thread throughout the publishing list.

In the extremely repressive period of the 1970s, an ‘oppositional’ title could sometimes be considered critical simply for bringing attention to a problematic or sensitive area, even if the title did not provide critical comment: “Some would argue,” Taylor says, “that simply to reveal the injustices of apartheid and to morally reject it is to take a critical position” – although he did not place himself in that category.⁴² One such instance is the series of bibliographies and digests of decisions made by the Publications Appeal Board produced by Louise Silver from the late 1970s, and her *Guide to Political Censorship in South Africa* (WUP). Her selections raised the significant issue of restrictions on free speech and the freedom to publish, without overtly judging the legislation involved. A review of the latter publication noted this, complaining that “[t]he reader is left, for the most part, to make up his or her own conclusions about the reasoning and jurisprudence of the Publications Appeal Board.”⁴³ The reviewer adds, “Silver may have arranged these decisions so as to let the contradictions speak for themselves.” The conclusion is that this balancing act cannot, and should not, be sustained: “One yearns for more of Louise Silver’s own opinions apart from the brief interjections on the new reasonable tolerance of

40 Gordon Lawrie, *New light on South West Africa: some extracts from and comments on the Odendaal report* (Johannesburg: WUP, 1964), p. 1.

41 Ibid., p. 11, emphasis added.

42 Rupert Taylor, “The narrow ground: Critical intellectual work on South Africa under apartheid,” *Critical Arts*, 5 (4) (1991), p. 30.

43 Neville Choonoo, ‘Review: A Guide to Political Censorship in South Africa by Louise Silver,’ *Research in African Literatures*, 17(3) (1986), p. 417.

the board. In these days, maintaining a neutral stance on such a subject is difficult to comprehend especially when total censorship is already upon us." This retreat into neutrality is on the one hand an example of 'liberal retreat,' and on the other a regression into 'privatism.'

Like WUP, UNP would come to be associated with a tradition of liberal thinkers. Some were very eminent figures in South African politics, such as Francis Napier Broome, the retired Judge President of Natal, whose memoir *Not the Whole Truth* was published in 1962 and was an unexpected bestseller. UNP also published celebrated liberal sociologist Hilda Kuper, with her study *Indian People in Natal* (1960). The work was well received, especially internationally, with positive reviews in journals including the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *American Anthropologist*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. With continuing popularity, it is unsurprising that more than ten years later, in 1974, a US edition would be produced by the Greenwood Press, having acquired the territorial rights from UNP. Perhaps the most celebrated liberal author was Edgar Brookes, with such works as *A History of Natal* (with Colin de B. Webb, 1965), *A History of the University of Natal* (1967), and the "political hot potato" *White Rule in South Africa, 1830–1910* (1974). The latter was a new and much revised edition of his celebrated *History of Native Policy in South Africa*, originally published by Nasionale Pers in 1924:

None of the English publishers in South Africa at the time would publish his doctoral thesis entitled 'History of Native Policy in South Africa' and he was forced to turn to the Afrikaner Nationalist leader, General J.B.M. Hertzog, for assistance. The book came out in 1924 at an opportune time as a general election was pending. Hertzog saw in Brooke's work historical justification for segregationism in South African "native policy" and agreed to get Die Nasionale Pers to publish it.⁴⁴

Brookes was later to renounce his support for segregation, and the new, revised edition of the book was submitted to OUP in the late 1960s. But – keeping in mind that this was around the time of the self-censorship controversy around the *Oxford History of South Africa* – the revised edition was rejected by OUP, in its new guise as an apolitical publisher focusing on schoolbooks. The publication was not much of a political risk for UNP, given that the university had for

44 P. Rich, *Hope and Despair: English-speaking intellectuals and South African politics, 1896–1976* (London: British Academic Press, 1993), p. 69.

so long been associated with Brookes, and that this was a new edition of a work that had been available in the public domain for some time.

The historical work of Edgar Brookes, and of titles such as Colin Tatz's *Shadow and Substance in South Africa: A Study in Land and Franchise Policies Affecting Africans, 1910–1960* (1962), also illustrates another trend. I have identified a tendency among South African academics during the apartheid period to examine politics from the distance of a historical study rather than through the medium of a current critique. An example is that of Bill Guest and John Sellers' title on *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony* (1985), which delivered a critique of clashes between "the dominant White society and the Black and Indian communities, and their political repercussions."⁴⁵ This was an oblique means of commenting on the politics of the day, through the channel of a highly scholarly and extensively researched study. Grundlingh points out that it was almost common practice to avoid "remarks in theses which had immediate political relevance, especially if the remarks contradicted their [academics'] own political views."⁴⁶ These publications were widely influential, as evidenced by advertisements and reviews of the time. Other historical works – notably the *James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples*,⁴⁷ as well as others – were also well received by the local press and academic journals alike. The press thus began to develop a reputation for publishing high-quality scholarly research in the areas of regional history (Natal and Zululand, now KwaZulu-Natal) as well as military history. De Baets notes that, "[i]n many countries, contemporary history is certainly the most dangerous field of study."⁴⁸ Thus, a historical study could be used to comment indirectly on current events. Moreover, in a sensitive political environment, much scholarly publishing in South Africa tended to steer clear of current, controversial (and politically dangerous) topics. But this does not imply a complete absence of commentary.

In the early years of UNP, a number of titles dealing with more current issues were also produced, largely under the auspices of the Natal Regional Survey

45 Book advertisement, *Theoria*, 65 (1985).

46 A. Grundlingh, 'Politics, Principles and Problems of a Profession: Afrikaner Historians and Their Discipline, c. 1920 – c. 1965' (Paper presented at the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 6–10 February 1990), Available online: <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/7869/HWS-149.pdf?sequence=1>, p. 21.

47 John Wright has written an interesting account of the compilation and publication of these volumes, see 'Making the James Stuart Archive,' *History in Africa*, 23 (1996), pp. 333–350.

48 Antoon de Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide, 1945 to 1990* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 19.

series. A sample title from this socio-economic survey series, which was produced by Oxford University Press for a few years before UNP was established, is *A Natal Indian Community: A socio-economic study in the Tongaat-Verulam Area* (1968). This kind of 'socio-economic' study drew attention to matters of race relations and demographics, but did not necessarily critique government policy. Rather, the surveys stopped short of addressing the full implications of apartheid policy. A reviewer sympathised with the authors, noting, "little good and much personal suffering may come of speaking," then going on to ask, "What should the planner do when faced with such a problem? Continue to work within the system? Leave? Deny that there is a problem? Agitate, and be asked to leave? This is the dilemma of the conscientious committed."⁴⁹ This 'dilemma' captures the position of 'liberal retreat' very clearly.

There were times when the presses addressed the political situation more overtly. For instance, UNP was responsible for producing the journal *Theoria*, which reveals a greater awareness while also situating the publishing programme as "non-political":

Non-political as it is, *Theoria* 15 bears at least one mark of the unhappy situation in which our country finds itself at present. It was the 'Emergency' which (no doubt inadvertently) provided one of our contributors with the leisure to write a long article. We are happy to be able to publish a criticism of *Antony and Cleopatra* written by Mr D.R.C. Marsh during his sojourn in Pietermaritzburg gaol; and we hope it will serve as an example to others who may find themselves in the same box in course of time, of how to make a virtue of necessity and dispel pleasantly and fruitfully at least some of the tedium of their plight.⁵⁰

In 1962, UNP published the surprisingly critical proceedings of a conference on *Education and our Expanding Horizons* (with a gap of a few years after the conference itself was held). Reviewers at the time commented directly on the oppositional stance of the work: "Coming at a time in South Africa's history when politically and racially the days were full of tension – when, indeed, a State of Emergency had been declared by the Government only a few days before the Conference began – the very forthrightness and free expression of all participants in itself makes stimulating reading."⁵¹

49 D. Scott Brown, 'Natal Plans,' *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 30(2) (1964), pp. 165–166.

50 'Editorial,' *Theoria* (1960), p. 1.

51 'Review in *Race Relations News*,' quoted in UNP book list (1969), UNA, p. 4.

The 1960s also saw the publication of some rather outspoken lectures from Wits University's 'Republic in a Changing World' lecture series and the Richard Feetham Memorial Lecture series, established in 1959 to "support the university's dedication to the ideals of academic freedom," according to publicity material. These, and other similar academic freedom lecture series – such as the T.B. Davie lectures at UCT and the E.G. Malherbe and Edgar Brookes memorial lectures at UNP – are an interesting case study of knowledge production. Often highly critical of the government, and even of the university hosting the speaker, the lectures appear to have been subject to little censorship. The speakers were frequently based at international universities, and thus not subject to the constraints on locally based academics. The lectures were often published and widely circulated – but, and this is a key distinction, not always by the university presses and never at the instigation of the university presses. Rather, the Academic Freedom Committee and the Student Representative Council were responsible for the series. Their publication by the university presses, I argue, may be seen more in the light of a service to the institution than as a form of oppositional publishing.

More militant studies of politics and current affairs generally were not a significant area of publishing until the relatively 'safe' period of the late 1980s when it had become clear that the Nationalist state's hold on power was increasingly tenuous. The implication is that it is:

a straightforward sociological observation that although the open universities may have committed themselves to liberal values, their liberalism was filtrated through structures which were racially based... Theirs [white academic and administrative staff] was a liberalism which was qualified by their socialization into, and location in, a situation of racial privilege. In short theirs was a 'racial liberalism'... This has meant that academic freedom has been compromised more than the liberal formulation could possibly imagine.⁵²

Echoing the debates around the responsibility of the "public intellectual," Taylor and Taylor take the argument further still:

It is our argument that what is required here is to see academic freedom as being tied to the virtue of intellectually confronting, exposing, and transcending the injustice of systemic white racism; and, at its core, this requires a public intellectual duty to pursue 'a consistent and exacting

52 Taylor & Taylor, 'Academic freedom and racial injustice,' p. 900.

universalism'..., a commitment not to shy away from the fact that even the formerly 'open universities' cannot be seen to be independent of and disconnected from questions of racial privilege and advantage for white people, oppression and exclusion for black people. For, decade after decade, the 'open universities' served hugely disproportionate numbers of white people, enabling cumulative advantages that have fuelled economic and social inequality.⁵³

This criticism may be summed up, somewhat harshly, in Mahmood Mamdani's description of the open universities as "islands of privilege, in which intellectuals functioned like potted plants in green houses. They had intellectual freedom but they lacked social accountability."⁵⁴

Of course, the situation was more complex than the poles of complicity and resistance. Marcum, writing in the 1980s in the midst of apartheid, saw the situation with more ambivalence and as being more ambiguous:

The open universities do not claim to have a perfect record; they concede that survival as a liberal institution in South African society often demands compromises that they view as necessary in the circumstances but which may be seen by others as weakness. The generations to come cannot but conclude that our open universities did not withdraw like the German universities in the 1930s, when Western values were destroyed.⁵⁵

Similarly, Mervyn Shear has attempted to provide a more balanced picture of the open universities during the apartheid years; he "looks at the documented record of the University of the Witwatersrand in an attempt to assess its position on racial discrimination, its opposition to infringements of fundamental human rights in South Africa and its contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle and to the promotion and maintenance of academic freedom."⁵⁶ He concludes with an equally ambivalent, even conflicting view on the University of the Witwatersrand, particularly with regard to the extent to which it opened its facilities to all South Africans and "what its contribution was to the

53 Ibid., p. 901.

54 Quoted in André du Toit, 'From autonomy to accountability: Academic freedom under threat in South Africa?', *Social Dynamics*, 26(1) (2000), p. 93.

55 John A. Marcum, *Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa* (California: University of California Press, 1981), p. 56.

56 Mervyn Shear, *Wits: A University in the Apartheid Era* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1996), p. xxvii.

transformation of South Africa.”⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that he does not mention publishing at all as an oppositional strategy.

The Dominant Hegemonic Response and Repressive Tolerance

The record of the open universities is thus ambivalent, which is perhaps only to be expected given the complexities of the apartheid era. But what of the universities that were not labelled as ‘open’ or as oppositional in stance? The Afrikaner universities have been characterised as *volksuniversiteite*, which accepted the subordination of the university to the state.⁵⁸ On the whole, they appear to have remained silent in terms of criticising the government, although there were some pockets of dissent.

A generalised support for apartheid policies among Afrikaans academics has been identified in various studies: “The absence of protest from Afrikaner-oriented universities in the face of government action which, by implication at least, has curtailed their freedom in the matter of staff appointments and student admissions can be understood readily in terms of the basic outlook of their leaders to racial and ethnic relations in general and the whole matter of Afrikaner survival in the South African context.”⁵⁹ This may be supported by the vote of confidence in the Nationalist government signed by a group of 1 500 Afrikaner academics in the early 1970s; an extract reads, “We herewith declare that we give our active support to the principle of separate development.”⁶⁰

Moreover, while support for separate development was not found across the board, there was little overt protest from the Afrikaner universities. Criticism was often confined to *volkskritiek* or *lojale verset*, and remained within the confined circles of the Afrikaans academics themselves. Thus, Hugo takes Afrikaner academics to task for their failure to resist infringements of academic and other freedoms more vigorously. He argues:

Can one account for the absence of an intellectual critique on the grounds that penalties imposed for dissent among Afrikaners were simply too

57 Ibid., p. 275.

58 J. Degenaar, ‘The Concept of a Volksuniversiteit,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 165.

59 M.J. Ashley and Hendrik W. van der Merwe, ‘Academic contrasts in South Africa,’ *Sociology of Education*, 42(3) (1969), p. 291.

60 Quoted in Pierre Hugo, ‘Academic Dissent and Apartheid in South Africa,’ *Journal of Black Studies*, 7(3) (1977), p. 259.

onerous to bear? The silence of academics in many other societies would easily be explicable in these terms. No intellectual energy needs to be expended on an explanation of the compliant behaviour of academics in places like Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia or any of the worst totalitarian Twentieth Century dictatorships. In these places dissidence requires understanding more in terms of the dynamics of suicidal behaviour. No such sanctions faced white South African opponents of the government. Incarceration, banning or other serious forms of state penalty (passport withdrawal, telephone taps etc.) did not paralyse or even seriously occupy the minds of most 'liberal' white opponents of the Government unless they (people like Rick Turner, David Webster and Beyers Naudé come to mind) had become a severe thorn in the Government's flesh by, for example, playing an influential role in black trade unions or in advancing the perceived interests of prohibited organizations such as the African National Congress.⁶¹

In other words, Hugo argues, "[w]hite academics during the apartheid years did not face...a choice between 'survival and scholarship.'"⁶² He thus condemns Afrikaner academics for not standing up to the Nationalist government to a greater extent than they did. This is reflected in the publishing programme at Unisa Press.

In contrast to Wits and Natal, Unisa was far more conservative in approach and inclination, although this does not mean that everything published fell on a particular side of the political spectrum. Unisa was, at least theoretically, a bilingual institution (Afrikaans and English), but was perceived to toe the government line in a manner similar to the 'pure' Afrikaans universities. Albert Grundlingh notes that, "[o]n the whole...the books and articles published by Unisa staff and the themes chosen by their students did not reflect much 'radical' influence."⁶³ This content analysis supports that contention. The analysis also reveals the limits of using the continuum of intellectual stances, as the model does not allow for all the shades of political response at an Afrikaner *volksuniversiteit* during the apartheid period. Nonetheless, it remains a useful methodological instrument, as we can certainly identify publications that fall into the 'privatism' and 'change through association' categories, if not the more

61 Pierre Hugo, 'The politics of untruth: Afrikaner academics for apartheid,' *Politikon*, 25(1) (1998), p. 52.

62 Ibid, p. 53.

63 A. Grundlingh, 'History on the hill: Aspects of scholarship and scholarly life at the Unisa History Department, 1968–2000,' *Kleio*, 38(2) (2006), p. 133.

liberal or militant ones. These are the categories Hugo labels 'apprehensive' and 'cautious activism,' respectively.

In 1960, just a few years after being established, Unisa's Publications Committee approved four inaugural lectures, four lectures, and nine research papers for publication. A sampling of the titles is somewhat representative of the political views of Unisa authors: the A series (inaugural lectures) included *Waarom die Groot Trek Geslaag Het* ('Why the Great Trek Succeeded') by History Professor C.F.J. Muller, the B series of lectures and conference proceedings included the papers from a symposium on *Kulturele Kontaktsituasies* ('Cultural Contact Situations'), and the C series of research work included a Festschrift for H.J. de Vleeschauwer. The kinds of texts that were published in 1960 reveal a number of trends that would be followed by Unisa in its later publishing programme: a focus on history, often from a white, Afrikaner, nationalist perspective; sociology, focusing on 'cultural' and ethnic issues; and apparently apolitical, non-controversial studies such as linguistics, which would often reveal certain political sympathies on deeper reading – or at the very least a tacit acceptance of the status quo.

There is also a sub-set of publications from the 1960s, which aimed at making sources available in the area of race relations, but not necessarily from a particular political viewpoint. An example of these is A.E. du Toit's publications of *The Earliest British Document on Education for the Coloured Races* (1962) and *The Earliest South African Documents on the Education and Civilization of the Bantu* (1963). In this class, too, we could place the later *Bibliography of Official Publications of the Black South African Homelands* (1979 ff.). These might be considered examples of privatism, but this kind of awareness creation, in the absence of political comment, was also found among the liberal tradition at WUP and UNP. To some extent, a range of views emerges when examining the publishing list in terms of awareness of the apartheid categories of "population group": black, white, coloured, and Indian. Many studies uncritically examine aspects of (racially differentiated) society, such as "*die Blanke platteland*" ('the White rural areas') and "*die Naturelle-Administrasie*" ('Native Administration'). A host of linguistic and anthropological studies focus on the 'Bantu,' the 'Nguni' and the 'Hottentot.' This use of the terminology of apartheid indicates little challenge to the status quo, and even a level of compliance with the system – the tacit acceptance implied by the category of privatism or 'neutrality.'

History was a key niche, emerging from the strong History Department. Supplementing Muller was the Afrikaner historiographer F.A. van Jaarsveld, as well as G.D. Scholtz, Jacob Brits, Ben Liebenberg and others. A sampling of historical titles reveals a preoccupation with historiography and nationalist themes, especially the Great Trek and Second Anglo-Boer War. The first of

these themes appears regularly, in titles such as *Ou en Nuwe Weë in die Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedskrywing* ('Old and New Paths in South African Historiography,' Van Jaarsveld's inaugural lecture of 1961); *Die Hervertolking van ons Geskiedenis* ('The Reinterpretation of our History,' 1964 – note the use of the word 'our'); and *A Select Bibliography of South African History* (1966 and many later reprints). These are just a few examples from a wider list focusing on historiography and approaches to the study of history.

The *Select Bibliography of South African History* was an atypical bestseller for Unisa, with a print run of 1 000 softcover and 1 000 hardcover copies. The optimistic print run – the average was between 200 and 600 copies – was made on the basis of good advance orders from schools:

The Cape, Natal, O.F.S. and Transvaal Education Departments have been approached and the Cape and Natal have expressed their interest in the publication. It is confidently believed that large orders will be received from high schools in all four provinces once the education departments have reviewed the publication. ... Besides enjoying a very much wider publicity and appeal than any earlier publication, it seems certain that the History Bibliography, apart from its prestige value and its publicising of the University (as well as its other publications), is the first truly economic proposition the Publication Committee has had... There is a very distinct possibility that the profits on this publication will contribute substantially towards the financing of later publications.⁶⁴

Notably, the report quoted above mentions the symbolic capital – the “prestige value” – of this book, in addition to its importance in terms of income.

The second key historical theme also produced a large number of titles. Van Jaarsveld and other historians have pointed out that Afrikaner historical writing revolved around the themes of the Great Trek and the Second Anglo-Boer War: he explains, “it was a dynamic period and a peculiarly romantic one; it was the period of great epic achievements by the Afrikaner people.”⁶⁵ These histories were part of the trend in Afrikaner historiography of casting Afrikaner history in terms of nationalism and ideology. It has been argued that such promotion of specific Afrikaner ideologies in itself constituted support for the

64 'Report on Publication Committee Affairs Prepared for Board of Tutors Meeting' (Unpublished document, 1966), UPA, pp. 4–5, my translation.

65 Quoted in Ken Smith, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988), p. 65.

apartheid regime and its ideologies. Thus, in addition to Muller's 1960 title, mentioned above, and his other titles on the experiences of the Voortrekkers, we find *Die Tydgenootlik Beoordeling van die Groot Trek, 1836–1842* ('The Contemporary Evaluation of the Great Trek,' 1962), *Die Beeld van die Groot Trek in die Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedskrywing 1843–1899* ('The Image of the Great Trek in South African Historiography,' 1963); *Nederland en die Voortrekkers van Natal* ('The Netherlands and the Natal Voortrekkers,' 1964); and a reprint of Muller's important work, *Die Oorsprong van die Groot Trek* ('The Origins of the Great Trek,' 1987). Again, this is but a sample of the numerous titles produced.

Muller's important and prize-winning work (he was awarded the Stals prize for History by the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns in 1977) was almost not published by Unisa Press at all. *Die Oorsprong van die Groot Trek* was first published by Tafelberg in 1974, and only by Unisa Press in 1987, when a second edition was required and the original publisher declined. Ken Smith argues that Muller "could not be classified amongst those who wrote history from a specifically republican or nationalist standpoint,"⁶⁶ but much of his work did focus on the Great Trek and other nationalist events, and it was certainly not critical of apartheid policies or ideologies.

Van Jaarsveld's role as an Afrikaner historian is also more complicated than it at first appears. While widely celebrated for his prolific studies of Afrikaner (and broader South African) history and historiography, he was also criticised for his approach to historiography, and especially for not mythologising Afrikaner history to a greater extent (as in Du Toit's "academic tarring and feathering" of him in 1984). His early years as a historian were characterised by a struggle for recognition, amidst an attempt to revive local historiography. Alex Mouton and Albert Van Jaarsveld argue that these experiences influenced his political beliefs and coloured his own work: "The knocks Van Jaarsveld took, made him more conformist, culminating in his ultra-conservative and chauvinistic book, *Afrikaner quo vadis* [published by Voortrekkerpers] in 1971. It would take the shock of the collapse of the Portuguese empire in 1974 and the Soweto uprising of 1976 to return him to a more enlightened and realistic stance."⁶⁷ On the whole, though, his ideological approach has been described as being "very much in line with Afrikaner nationalist political thinking,"⁶⁸ and he was a close friend of the very conservative historian G.D. Scholtz. His political leanings are

66 Ibid., p. 77.

67 F.A. Mouton and Albert van Jaarsveld, "Angry Young Men": F.A. van Jaarsveld, T.S. van Rooyen and the Afrikaner Historiographical Polemic of 1953–1954,' *Historia*, 49(2) (2004), pp. 167–185.

68 Smith, *The Changing Past*, p. 84.

an important factor in considering his academic work because, as Mouton notes, “[f]or Van Jaarsveld, being an historian was not just a job; it was a calling to be a public intellectual.”⁶⁹ As one of the most prolific and respected historians of his time, it is significant that he chose to publish only a handful of his works through Unisa Press.

In contrast, Van Jaarsveld’s friend, the historian and journalist G.D. Scholtz, who also published just a few items with Unisa Press, was unapologetically supportive of apartheid. In addition to his work with Unisa Press, which was not particularly controversial, he wrote some outspoken works: *’n Swart Suid-Afrika?* (‘A Black South Africa?’, Overberg Publishers, 1964) and *Die Bedreiging van die Liberalisme* (‘The Threat of Liberalism’, Voortrekkerpers, 1965) as warnings of the dangers of not following the path of separate development. These fall at the far left of the continuum, in open support of apartheid.

Similarly, B.J. Liebenberg published a number of his historical studies at Unisa, where he was a professor, but not his controversial study of Andries Pretorius, based on his doctoral thesis. The latter study, *Andries Pretorius in Natal*, was published by Africana Books, and caused a stir because it portrayed the Voortrekker leader in a relatively unbiased – and thus unflattering – light. This reflects the wider tendency among colleagues in the Department of History and the wider university, as well as within the ruling party and its adherents, to avoid conflict and yet allow internal debates about the ideological dimensions of apartheid. This also reflects Unisa academics’ adoption of N.P. van Wyk Louw’s concept of *lojale verset*. However, none of these debates, even when considered ‘reformist,’ envisaged fundamental changes to the apartheid framework itself. In other words, it becomes clear that Unisa allowed a certain amount of dissent, but no direct challenge to the government of the day, a stance characterised as “repressive tolerance.”⁷⁰

A few examples of publications from Unisa reflect this balancing between conservatism and liberalism, within the boundaries of repressive tolerance. At one end of the continuum, an overtly compliant text is that of Jan Hendrik Moolman, *Ru-apartheid en afsonderlike ontwikkeling in Pretoria* (‘Pure apartheid and separate development in Pretoria,’ 1972). Moolman, who was head of the Department of Geography at Unisa and later Director of the Africa Institute of South Africa, coined the concept of *ru-apartheid*, which implied total segregation of the races in a geographic area. However, he argued that he did not support the imposition of *ru-apartheid* on South African cities, but rather

69 F.A. Mouton, ‘Editing *Historia* and the legacy of Professor Floors van Jaarsveld,’ *Historia*, 56(1) (2011), p. 153.

70 Marcum, *Education, Race and Social Change*.

(what he considered the watered-down version) the notion of separate development, with separate, duplicated facilities in two overlapping urban segments. This was an influential idea, with other academics applying the concept to urban settings around South Africa.⁷¹ Moolman also produced population distribution maps of South Africa and a study of Bophuthatswana, one of the apartheid-era homelands or bantustans. He was a clear supporter of apartheid policies, as evidenced by his publications.

A similarly biased text was *The Marketing of the International Image of South Africa* (1978). The sociologist Geoffrey Cronjé, who edited the book, is now notorious for his outspoken support for apartheid policies, and he was a significant contributor to the censorship legislation in the 1960s. However, this title is a more complicated example than the last, largely because of the diversity of contributors to the edited collection. On the one hand, this collection of conference proceedings speaks of the “success of the South African socio-cultural industry” and of the importance of whites doing “what is best for Blacks,” but on the other hand, a black contributor to the conference argued in the same volume that “the first thing that must be done is to remove all apartheid legislation.”⁷² There is also a recognition of “the fact that we discriminate in law on the basis of colour and the need to demonstrate to the world at large that we are moving with will towards an accommodation that people of all colours in the Republic will accept.”⁷³ This reflects the room for dissent at Unisa, and the support for the expression of differing viewpoints – the mindset of *lojale verset*.

Certain titles dealing with current affairs were not as supportive of government policy. One example is Willem Kleynhans and his comparative study of political parties, *Politieke Partye in Suid-Afrika: 'n Empiriese vergelykende beskouing* (‘Political parties in South Africa: An empirical comparative view,’ 1974). While Kleynhans began his career as a political scientist in support of the National Party, from 1955 onwards he became steadily disenchanted – beginning with the disenfranchisement of Coloured voters in the Western Cape. As part of the ‘Group of 13’ lecturers from Unisa and the University of Pretoria, he took part in protests and petitions against the narrowing of the electorate. Like others in his position at the Afrikaans universities – *verligte* or progressive intellectuals – it appears that he was punished by delays in promotion. The acceptance of

71 F.J. Nöthling, ‘Die vestiging van nie-blankes in Brakpan, 1888–1930, *Kleio*, 5(1) (1973), pp. 14–38.

72 Geoffrey Cronjé and G.H.G. Lucas, *The Marketing of the International Image of South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa, 1978), pp. 118, 252.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 238.

Kleynhans's views by anti-apartheid activists is exemplified by approving quotations of his work in one of SPRO-CAS's oppositional publications, *Directions of Change in South African Politics* (1971). It is difficult to classify Kleynhans's work according to the continuum's categories of dissent; he may perhaps best be placed in the 'change through association' category.

The Road to Soweto?

The 1970s were a period of increasing repression, but also of increasing anti-apartheid activism. There were strikes, the rise of trade unionism, and growing activism linking the public and the academic, all of which led to "profound shifts in ideas and consciousness among intellectuals."⁷⁴ So, if we look at key dates in the struggle against apartheid, we might expect to see some reflection in the publishing lists of the university presses. But, even allowing for a delay for research, peer review and the publication process, these events seemed to pass with only minor comment. As Suttie mentions with regard to the impact of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 on the Unisa Library, "since it did not have an immediate bearing on segregated higher education, the violence passed without comment."⁷⁵ Indeed, a reading of the minutes of Publications Committee meetings from any of the local presses elicits no commentary, discussion or even acknowledgement of wider political events; it was business as usual. The impression created is that the university presses considered themselves apart from and even unaffected by politics.

The response rate to key political events was thus slower at the university presses than at other publishers, even where the latter published serious academic analyses – this genre may indeed benefit from a certain measure of distance. For example, WUP's response to Sharpeville, *The Road to Sharpeville* by Matthew Chaskalson, appeared more than two decades later, in 1986. The same occurred with the Soweto Uprising in 1976, and the State of Emergency of 1986: *Why was Soweto Different?* by Jeremy Seekings, appeared over a decade after the uprisings, in 1988, while the literary study, *Authorship, Authenticity and the Black Community: The novels of Soweto 1976* by Kelwyn Sole, was only published in 1986. (To be fair, the latter title would not have been possible earlier, given that it analyses novels that were published *about* Soweto, but inevitably sometime

74 Michael Burawoy and Karl Von Holdt, *Conversations with Bourdieu: The Johannesburg moment* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), p. 1.

75 M-L. Suttie, 'The formative years of the University of South Africa Library, 1946 to 1976,' *Mousaion*, 23(1) (2005), pp. 102–103.

after the uprisings.) In contrast, a socialist analysis of the Soweto revolt was published internationally by 1979: *Year of Fire, Year of Ash. The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution?* by Baruch Hirson (Zed Press). In addition, the far more radical student body had been responding to political events with much greater immediacy. For example, the Black Students Society at the University of Natal produced a title called *June 16* shortly after the Soweto Uprising. The title was banned. Similarly, several pamphlets produced by the Student Representative Council at the University of Cape Town tackled oppositional themes head-on, and were subsequently banned. A book published by the Wits Alternative Service Group, *The Nyanga Story*, was not banned, but “censored for political reasons” in 1982.⁷⁶

Merrett notes that the student press also came under fire in this period: *Varsity*, a newsletter at UCT, was suspended from 1967 to 1968; the editor of the *Wits Student* was deported in 1972; *Vlieg*, a literary magazine run by students and academics at the University of Pretoria, was banned by the Rector in the 1970s; and the *Wits Student* was again censored by the Vice-Chancellor in 1979. The University of Natal’s magazine *Dome* was also strongly critical of the government and was often banned as a result, as was *Wits Wits* (a deliberate repetition and play on words). The printing press on which *Dome* was produced reportedly had to be moved around to prevent it being confiscated by the security police. Many academics also had their work censored, and Merrett attributes this to the reason that “...the South African government required intellectual suppression in order to survive.”⁷⁷

This intellectual suppression had a dampening effect at WUP, which saw its output and reputation decline through the 1970s. In contrast, UNP tripled its output at the same time, largely due to a rise in the number of independent research centres publishing their work. Particularly opinionated work arose from a focus on labour and law. By the 1970s, all black oppositional parties were either banned or underground, and “trade unions became the only legal way to secure political gains for blacks, and became substitutes for the political parties that had been banned.”⁷⁸ Similarly, studies of trade unions, labour and law served as substitutes for direct studies of politics. Thus, “[p]artly in reaction to black consciousness and partly in response to wider intellectual trends, the early seventies saw the reorientation of significant sectors of white students

76 Beacon for Freedom of Expression, Index Librorum Prohibitorum (Database of Banned Books) (n.d.), Available online: www.beaconforfreedom.org.

77 Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 197.

78 Shireen Ally, ‘Oppositional intellectualism as reflection, not rejection, of power: Wits Sociology, 1975–1989,’ *Transformation*, 59 (2005), p. 87.

and academics towards the labor movement.”⁷⁹ For instance, in a few publications for the Centre for Business Studies, including *The Right to Strike* (WUP, 1985), Loet Douwes Dekker would explore the political role of trade unions and labour action. In later work, after the end of apartheid, Dekker – a former unionist himself – emphasised the significant role of civil society in contributing to the fall of the apartheid regime.⁸⁰ This reflects the ‘political reform’ classification on the continuum, as such academics tend to be openly involved in political organisations and civil society, beyond the sphere of academic protest.

At Unisa, too, commentary on politics could be made through the medium of labour studies, as at the other university presses. Thus studies of trade unions, black-white relations and black labour emerged, especially from the Institute for Labour Relations. N.E. Wiehahn produced his inaugural lecture at Unisa, on *The Regulation of Labour Relations in a Changing South Africa* (Unisa, 1977), before going on to put his name to the government’s Wiehahn Commission on labour legislation in 1979. This report was then examined, in turn, by B.U. Lombard and others, in *The Challenge of the New Industrial Relations Dispensation in South Africa* (Unisa, 1979). Francine de Clerq has suggested that this area of study, focusing on industrial relations and labour, was a reflection of significant internal debates within the ruling class “over the nature and scope of concessions necessary to buy over certain strata of the black population to act as a buffer between the white ruling minority and the black masses.”⁸¹ She adds that, after the implementation of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions’ recommendations, “[n]ew ways need[ed] to be found to organize relations between the State, the employers and the workers, and to coerce the black labour force into more effective institutions of labour control and discipline.” Such studies thus tended to support the status quo, but not necessarily uncritically.

As at Wits, some of the research emanating from centres at Natal University was more radical in criticising the government than the usual publications produced by the university press. These centres include the Institute for Social Research, Centre for Applied Social Sciences, Centre for Adult Education, and especially the Centre for Social and Development Studies and Indicator Project South Africa, under Professor Lawrence Schlemmer. Their impact was certainly felt, as this example shows: “As far as the low intensity conflict in Natal was

79 Raymond Suttner, ‘The Freedom Charter: The People’s Charter in the 1980s,’ *Crime and Social Justice*, 24 (1985), p. 74.

80 Loet Douwes Dekker, ‘Towards democratic practices: South Africa in the 1970s decade’ (Unpublished article, 2010), Available online: <http://ldouwesdekker.wordpress.com/>.

81 Francine de Clerq, ‘Apartheid and the Organised Labour Movement,’ *Review of African Political Economy*, 14 (1979), p. 72.

concerned, the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg performed a magnificent job of data collection and analysis: its work had a profound effect on perceptions of the Natal conflict and is a model of international standing for repression monitoring.”⁸² Indeed, some of their work may have been considered too controversial (too ‘militant-radical’) for the university press, as they frequently were disseminated through independent publishers such as Ravan Press.

Examples of such research, which did end up being published by UNP, include a report on *Student Protest and the White Public in Durban* – the back cover blurb describes “a report on a brief investigation of the responses of white citizens in Durban to a public protest organized by students of the University of Natal in June, 1972”⁸³ – and one on *Reactions to Political Pressure in South Africa*, “an exploratory study among whites.”⁸⁴ While a number of these studies focus on attitudes among white South Africans, given the racial make-up of KwaZulu-Natal there was also a corresponding interest, from the late 1970s at least, in Indian attitudes – and using Indian researchers. So we find, for instance, a study of *Urban Relocation and Racial Segregation: The case of Indian South Africans* (1977), followed by *Indian Attitudes to the New Constitution and to Prospects for Change* (1985), which examined “the racial partitioning of South African space.”

Some titles are somewhat more ambiguous in their political orientation. The Centre for Business Studies’ report on investment, *A Case against Disinvolvement in the South African Economy* (WUP, 1978), for instance, argued that numerous changes had been made for the better in South African society, and that foreign investors should not disinvest from or boycott the country. This is not necessarily a pro-apartheid stance, but it can also not be described as oppositional. Such ambiguous titles tend to fall in the ‘change through association’ category. They indicate a ready degree of compliance, and suggest that the authors and their publishers tacitly supported the status quo at this point.

Political Reform and Declining Risk

As state policy evolved in the 1980s, universities and their departments became “relatively well-protected,” and “the idea that academic freedom demands the

82 C. Merrett, ‘A Tale of Two Paradoxes: Media Censorship in South Africa, Pre-Liberation and Post-Apartheid,’ *Critical Arts*, 15(1/2) (2001), p. 56.

83 Aubrey Smith, Lawrence Schlemmer and Patricia Croudace, *Student Protest and the White Public in Durban* (Pietermaritzburg: UNP, 1973).

84 Foszia Fisher, Raphael de Kadt and Lawrence Schlemmer, *Reactions to political pressure in South Africa: an exploratory study among whites* (Pietermaritzburg: UNP, 1975).

academic responsibility of documenting state repression became more widely accepted in universities than hitherto.”⁸⁵ Resistance could manifest itself in various ways: “The universities, as such, have limited their expression of dissent to academic writings, public meetings, and symbolic protests, so far as permitted by increasingly restrictive legislation.”⁸⁶ Yet some academics suggest that there was very little oppositional *publishing* as such within academic circles in South Africa: “No intellectual journal exist[ed] in which opposing points of view are thrashed out” and there was no “deep-probing debate” across the political spectrum.⁸⁷ They argue that academics avoided “the most socially relevant and historically significant questions about their own society”⁸⁸ – a clear case of privatism.

But studies in the 1980s did grow more oppositional in approach, and the university presses accepted and published topics that would previously have been considered too risky. This reflects a move away from privatism and tacit acceptance. Moreover, these studies expanded to include surveys of all population groups, for example, *Attitudes Towards Beach Integration* (UNP, 1982) and *Broken Promises and Lost Opportunities: A study of the reactions of white and coloured residents of Port St Johns to the control of the area by a black administration* (UNP, 1985). The economist Jill Nattrass’s 1983 study of poverty among black people, *The Dynamics of Black Rural Poverty in South Africa*, which emerged from the Development Studies Unit at the University of Natal, suggested that poverty was not only or not primarily an economic issue, but a political issue, with underlying economic causes. Her work had a wide impact, not least on scholars in her own department at the university. One of these, Julian May, produced *Differentiation and Inequality in the Bantustans: Evidence from KwaZulu* (UNP, 1987). This quantitative study was intended as a corrective to the scanty government data available on the bantustans or homelands, and the author certainly saw it as a contribution to political reform.

The publication of conference proceedings could also at times be a channel for the dissemination of more outspoken work. UNP had published conference proceedings for some time, such as *Constitutional Change in South Africa* in 1978 (edited by John Benyon), albeit intended for a limited audience. But the

85 Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 147.

86 Leonard Thompson, ‘Some Problems of Southern African Universities,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 290.

87 D. Welsh and M. Savage, ‘The university in divided societies: The case of South Africa,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 144.

88 Ibid., p. 145.

1980s saw much more openly critical work being published. Thus, Schlemmer's publication of conference proceedings, such as *Conflict in South Africa: Build-up to revolution or impasse?* (1983) and Alan Bell and Robin Mackie's *Detention and Security Legislation in South Africa* (1985) for the Indicator Project South Africa are clearly oppositional. Mervyn Frost's inaugural lecture as professor of political studies examined *Politics, Reform and Oppression* (1987), perhaps unsurprisingly given that his later studies tended to focus on political ethics. Douglas Booth would analyse political processes through the lens of *Black Liberation Politics* (1987) and *Desegregating South African Sport* (1988), perspectives that would not easily have been published ten years earlier. With their analysis of white right-wing political parties, *Vir Volk en Vaderland: A Guide to the White Right* (1989), the sociologists Janis Grobbelaar, Simon Bekker and Robert Evans revealed the fragmentation of the ruling party and of the ideologies still propping up apartheid.

Similarly critical material emerged from the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at Wits University, which may be classified as advocating 'political reform' or even a 'militant-radical' stance. A sample of titles clearly reveals this ideological slant: *Outcasts from Justice: The consequences of banning orders under the Internal Security Act*, by Sarah Parry (1981); *Ruling with the Whip: A report on the violation of human rights in the Ciskei* (1983), and *Mabangalala: The rise of right-wing vigilantes in South Africa* (1986) by Nicholas Haysom (1983); *Emergency Law* (edited by Nicholas Haysom and Laura Mangan, 1987); and *The Freedom Charter: A blueprint for a democratic South Africa*, by Gilbert Marcus (1985). Haysom's work on violence and human rights violations in particular was considered cutting edge and falls within the category of academics "bearing witness," i.e. the 'militant' category. The publicity material for the work highlighted the "harrowing picture of vicious, unbridled assault against anti-apartheid activists (sometimes with police compliance)." John Dugard, who was later to become a Special Rapporteur to the United Nations, produced reports on security legislation in South Africa (1982) and *The Denationalization of Black South Africans in Pursuance of Apartheid* (1984). It is not clear whether such titles can be unproblematically attributed to Wits University Press – the title pages read "Centre for Applied Legal Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg," which means that the imprint of the press itself was not used. But at the same time, the Press was providing a publishing service for such titles, including conferring an ISBN and assisting with production and distribution. The Publications Committee also played a role in approving all university publications.

Seminars held at the African Studies Institute were also regularly published by WUP, and their topics, too, were somewhat more politically oriented and

critical than before. An example is *Food, Authority and Politics: Student riots in South African schools* by Jonathan Hyslop, published in 1986 (and later re-published by the oppositional Ravan Press in 1991). Further seminar papers published included a Marxist critique of the South African economy (1986) and an examination of the links between industry and the state (1987). These are more theoretical than the 'militant-radical' publications of CALS, but no less critical. Although the press played at best a service role in producing and disseminating such works, it is perhaps from such titles that WUP received its reputation for publishing oppositional texts. Titles emanating from the Institute for Social Research and later the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Natal had a similar effect on the reputation of the university press there.

Unisa's publications list from the 1980s ranges across the political spectrum, reflecting internal debates and *lojale verset*. Some texts support apartheid openly, while others are examples of privatism or withdrawal from political comment; still others are more liberal in orientation and some advocate reform from within. The titles give a sense of the ongoing internal debates on these issues: *Swart Arbeid, Knelpunte in Arbeidsbetrekkinge* ('Black labour, sticking points in labour relations,' 1978); *Urban Blacks in Urban Space* (1980); *Free Enterprise, Political Democracy and Labour in South Africa* (1980); *Black and White Labour in One Common South African Industrial Relations System* (1980); *The Black Manager in a White World* (1981); *Problems of Black Advancement in South Africa* (1981); and *The Future of Residential Group Areas* (1986 – this being one of the first Indian authors at Unisa Press).

Another group of publications that is difficult to classify is the series of conference proceedings emanating from the Institute for Theological Research, after it was established in 1975. These are not necessarily more critical than other works from Unisa Press, but they expressed an openness to a wider spectrum of viewpoints. This may in part be attributed to the Director of the Institute, Willem Vorster, a New Testament scholar at Unisa who was as well-known for the quality of his work as for his openness to opposing views: "Vorster was a critical scholar: nothing was just accepted and no view propagated without critical scrutiny...without fear he vented his critical thoughts and was always ready to explain the 'critical faith' he believed in."⁸⁹ He used the vehicle of the ITR conferences to explore areas beyond the traditional confines of religion, and especially to examine wider social issues. A selection of the titles published gives a sense of the wide scope of ideas examined: *Sexism and Feminism in Theological Perspective* (no. 8, 1984), the first time feminist theology received

89 Le Roux, quoted in Eugene Botha (ed.), *Willem S. Vorster: Speaking of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. x.

academic attention in South Africa; *Views on Violence* (no. 9, 1985), which drew attention to structural violence in society, and the inherent violence of apartheid: "It is the systematic denial of rightful options to certain people on whatever grounds, whether it be race or class, that does violence to their person" (1985, p. 45); *Reconciliation and Construction: Creative options for a rapidly changing South Africa* (no. 10, 1986); and *Building a New Nation: The Quest for a New South Africa* (1991) – a publication that "endorse[d] a rejection of anything that smacks of apartheid" (p. 44).

Title number 13, *The Morality of Censorship*, illustrates the difficulties in attempting to categorise some of Unisa's publications. On the one hand, continuing conservatism may be seen in the make-up of the contributors: seven authors, six white males, and one white female – including Prof J.C.W. van Rooyen, who was chairman of the Publications Appeal Board at the time. But a growing liberalisation, and a commitment to 'change through association,' was also reflected in some of the contributions themselves: "In our society we have a publicly unresponsive and unrepresentative government, which has a monopoly on instruments of coercion without being accountable to the large majority of the population it is supposed to serve, but instead dominates" (1989, p. 24). In his chapter, Venter went on to call on his fellow academics to change: "Let us not fiddle while Soweto burns" (1989, p. 33). It had taken a full thirteen years for the Soweto Uprising to be mentioned in a Unisa Press book! What is achieved in this collection is similar to what was attempted in the Unisa journals: the inclusion of a wider variety of viewpoints and contributors, at a point when these were considered low risk, as Gardiner points out: "What was being attempted by *Unisa English Studies* was the inclusion of an inoffensive work by a black poet into an otherwise white collection with as little political risk as possible."⁹⁰

It was only with the transition to a 'new' South Africa that key *current* events began to be reflected, and relatively quickly, within the publishing output of the local university presses. For instance, Monica Bot's analysis of *School Boycotts 1984: The Crisis in African Education* appeared in 1985, just a year after the boycotts; it was produced as part of the Indicator Project. Unusually, a book in the field of literature similarly appeared soon after the publication of a number of new 'struggle' poets (there tends to be a greater time lag in disciplines such as literary studies). Thus, *Black Mamba Rising: South African worker poets in struggle* edited by Ari Sitas and featuring Alfred Qabula, Mi Hlatshwayo and Nise Malange, appeared in 1986 (co-published with Cosatu's 'Worker

90 Michael Gardiner, "Time to Talk: Literary Magazines in the Pretoria-Johannesburg Region, 1956 to 1978," *Donga*, 1 (2002), pp. 8–39, Available online: http://www.art-archives-southafrica.ch/PDFs/Gardiner_survey-SA-poetry_1956-1978.pdf, p. 12.

Resistance and Culture Publications'), yet was able to include analysis of poetry published as recently as 1984, in the case of Mi Hlatshwayo's works published by FOSATU. This diminishing time lag reflects the waning dangers associated with critique of the government, as well as a growing sense of urgency as political events came to a head.

Off the Grid: Independent Oppositional Publishing

The emergence of an alternative publishing outlet for the most outspoken, dissident and radical academics in South Africa underscores the absence of radical university press publishing. At the oppositional end of the spectrum of responses, independent publishers provided a significant platform for anti-apartheid voices. To examine them is thus to enhance the continuum, as it applies to university press publishing, as well as to provide a counter-example of committed, value-driven publishing. These were not publishers that would hide behind a screen of academic neutrality; rather, they saw themselves as having a social responsibility to transmit certain values and ideologies through the medium of their books.

Strikingly, there appears to have been little oppositional publishing in the 1950s and 1960s, and the reasons for this are unclear from the existing literature. Kantey has referred to the 1960s as the "decade of black silence," and that could form part of the reason.⁹¹ Cloete notes the rise of Black Consciousness, and suggests a tentative link between the growth of that ideology in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the rise of oppositional publishing.⁹² Philip, in turn, has suggested that external publishers fulfilled this role in the 1960s, for instance at Oxford University Press under Leo Marquard.⁹³ The greatest exponents of oppositional publishing in South Africa were most active during the most oppressive period of apartheid history, the 1970s and 1980s: David Philip Publishers (founded 1971), Ravan Press (1972), and Skotaville (1982), and to a lesser extent Renoster (1971), BLAC (1973), Ad Donker (1973), Taurus (1975), Buchu Books (1987) and Seriti sa Sechaba (1988), as well as smaller, short-lived publishing programmes. These publishers may be defined as oppositional

91 Mike Kantey, 'Foreword: Publishing in South Africa,' in *Africa Bibliography 1989* (London: International African Institute, 1990), p. xii.

92 D. Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s,' in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000).

93 Philip, 'Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid.'

largely because of their common commitment to publishing works opposing the government. While oppositional publishers fall only on the extreme right side of the model, there is some difference in how radical each publisher can be considered to have been. Renoster Books, for instance, has been described as having “liberal-literary” values, while Ravan and Skotaville were considerably more radical.⁹⁴ Thus, while all may be classified as falling within the “oppositional code,” the use of the continuum enables us to begin to clarify differences in approach and ideology within these broad categories.

Within the repressive environment, intellectual and cultural influences were often controlled as far as possible, as the regime attempted to mould thoughts and attitudes, and to limit outside viewpoints. In response, the aim of the oppositional publishing houses was not the traditional capitalist aim of making profits, but was rather overtly political and strongly anti-government: “In South Africa, alternative publishers were especially characterised by their strong political focus and their antagonistic, undermining attitude to the apartheid regime and establishment.”⁹⁵ In fact, an oppositional publisher must be defined in relation to that which it opposes – and in South Africa, this was primarily the State but also, to a lesser degree, the mainstream publishing houses associated with it. Thus, the African Bookman’s “consistent political attitude” informed the publishing philosophy and mission of that publisher. Similarly, Ravan Press explicitly set out with just such a political agenda in mind: “We are part of that section of South African society engaged in changing the present social system...we aim to produce books that inform the struggle in the present...and create a climate in which the new society can be discussed.”⁹⁶ With their explicit opposition to censorship, such publishers regularly risked the banning of their works as well as harassment by the security police. Extreme examples are those of Jaki Seroke (Skotaville), who was imprisoned in terms of the Internal Security Act in 1987, and Peter Randall (Ravan), who was banned in 1977. The other oppositional publishers all experienced varying degrees of police harassment, such as surveillance, searches, and stock seizures.

The agenda in the case of David Philip is similarly reflected in their slogan: ‘Books That Matter for Southern Africa.’ David and Marie Philip founded the

94 Peter McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 282.

95 M.R. Venter, ‘Inventing an Alternative through Oppositional Publishing: Afrikaans Alternative Book Publishing in Apartheid South Africa – the Publishing House Taurus (1975–1991) as Case Study,’ *Innovation*, 35 (2007), p. 95.

96 Quoted in Isabel Essery, ‘The impact of politics on indigenous independent publishers from 1970 to 2004 illustrated by a case study of David Philip Publishers’ (MA thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2005), p. 31.

publishing house in 1971 after OUP's withdrawal from political publishing, and commitment was seen as an important part of their mission: "Publishers of integrity are, or ought to be, endemically independent, always prepared to give voice to criticism of the establishment, always the supporters of freedom and creativity, holding open the doors for discussion and debate."⁹⁷ Moreover, the Philips overtly focused on politically oppositional and relevant publications, as an interview makes clear: "We had been told that we should stop publishing political books [at OUP], we should concentrate on books for African schools, which was one of the things that we were doing. I just felt it necessary to carry on with publishing political books."⁹⁸

The mission in the case of Renoster Books and its successor, Bateleur Books, as well as Ad Donker and Taurus was not only political, but also driven by the imperative of publishing significant local literary voices. Their political motivation arose out of this primary mission, in that the publishers were opposed to the censorship of specific literary works and to the marginalisation of black authors. Renoster was founded by the well-known author Lionel Abrahams, with Eva and Robert Royston, in 1971; Ad Donker founded his own publishing house in 1973; and Taurus was formed in 1975 specifically to publish the work of André P. Brink and later other important literary figures.

Skotaville's mission was overtly political, too: it was established by Jaki Seroke and Mothobi Mutloatse, who had both previously worked at Ravan Press, specifically to create a space for the "needs, aspirations and objectives of Black writers" to be recognised without being "subject to the criteria, constraints and restrictions" imposed by "commercial publishing houses" – and to be a "voice for the voiceless."⁹⁹ Moreover, the new publishing house was intended to "serve the cultural struggle, in the broader national liberation struggle in our country." Skotaville was closely linked with the ethos of Black Consciousness and with the African Writers' Association – indeed, Ndebele would comment that the AWA's "singular achievement has been the establishment of Skotaville."¹⁰⁰ The very name of Skotaville revealed its political affiliations: it was named after former ANC Secretary-General Mveli Trevor Skota. Moreover, Skotaville's political mission is reflected in its structure, as a black-owned small

97 Philip, 'Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,' p. 41.

98 Philip, quoted in Geoffrey Davis and Holger Ehling, 'An interview with David and Marie Philip,' in Geoffrey Davis (ed.), *Voyages and Explorations: Southern African Writing* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), p. 133.

99 Jaki Seroke, 'The Voice of the Voiceless: An interview with Jaki Seroke,' *African Book Publishing Record*, 10(4) (1984), p. 201.

100 Njabulo S. Ndebele, 'The Writers' Movement in South Africa,' *Research in African Literatures*, 20(3) (1989), p. 416.

press. This was taken further with the establishment of Seriti sa Sechaba, the first publisher owned by a black woman, after Dinah Lefakane left Skotaville to found a feminist press in 1987.

This mission-driven form of publishing echoes Bourdieu's sub-division of the field of cultural production into the field of restricted production (dominated by the pursuit of symbolic capital, or the recognition of the symbolic value of its product) and the field of large-scale production (dominated by the quest for economic profit).¹⁰¹ "Broadly defined [alternative publishing] includes anything outside mainstream commercial publishing, where the market is the final determinant of what is published. In contrast, [in alternative publishing] the publishing mission takes precedence over the business mission."¹⁰² This implies risk-taking and an interest in long-term interest rather than short-term gain, as further described by Bourdieu:

The entrepreneur whose motive is economic profit puts out cultural products that accommodate an evident demand in order to maximize profits over the short term by means of a fast turnover. The entrepreneur whose aim is cultural prestige rather than fast profit takes risks with his products, since it will only become clear in the longer term whether they are to become highly rated (and sold) as cultural objects.¹⁰³

The additional motivation of the oppositional publishers, however, was neither profit nor prestige, but activism for the purpose of political change – a significant difference in publishing strategy. And, because the political mission takes precedence, funding – often external donor funding – is key: "Most oppositional publishers have been largely funded from abroad and usually classify themselves as non-profitmaking."¹⁰⁴ Perhaps as a result of their largely unorthodox business models or their inability to reach a sustainable market, as well as the drying-up of funding after the end of the anti-apartheid struggle, few oppositional publishers survived into the twenty-first century. Ravan would be bought up by Hodder & Stoughton Educational South Africa in 1994, having survived just long enough to see the new South Africa come into being. Through later mergers and acquisitions, Ravan's backlist is now part of the mainstream trade publisher Pan Macmillan's list. Similarly, Taurus ceased publishing in the

101 P. Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods,' *Poetics*, 14(1/2) (1985), pp. 13–44.

102 Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa,' p. 43.

103 Frank De Glas, 'Authors' oeuvres as the backbone of publishers' lists: Studying the literary publishing house after Bourdieu,' *Poetics*, 25 (1998), p. 380.

104 Philip, 'Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,' p. 45.

early 1990s, and its stock was bought by Human & Rousseau, also a mainstream publisher in South Africa, and now owned by Nasionale Pers/Media 24.

But even the more commercially successful publishers have not continued publishing in the same form. David Philip has survived only as an imprint of New Africa Books, after the Philips retired in late 1999 and sold a share to that (black-owned) organisation. Ad Donker was bought out by Jonathan Ball, another independent. Skotaville lives on, in theory, as part of a much reorganised media firm run by Mutloatse, the Mutloatse Art Heritage Trust. None of these is still an active, productive imprint. The full range of factors leading to the demise or decline of these publishers deserves further scholarly attention.

A Broader View

The application of the continuum model enables a thematic cross-section of publications to be examined, but gives little sense of output as a whole. While the overall figures are in fact more substantial than previously supposed, as may be seen from Figure 5, the publishing lists from the university presses have been rather small. The figure has at times risen above the oft-quoted average of between ten and twenty new titles a year per press,¹⁰⁵ but remains small when compared to international figures. Indeed, compared to other countries, South Africa's research output may seem thin. There was never a huge output from the university presses – even at its peak, it remained below 40 titles a year per publishing house. This is approximately the output of a medium-sized university press in the USA, the country with the largest number of university presses nowadays. In their early years, the presses published just a few titles, somewhat sporadically. In contrast, for instance, a large university press such as Yale issued as many as 125 books during its first five years.¹⁰⁶ The fairly low numbers reflect factors such as the small author pool in South Africa, the small market locally, and the limited resources and capacity of the university presses.

Figure 5 reveals some interesting insights. For instance, it is significant to note that, in the 1980s and 1990s, Natal was to overtake Wits in terms of output, although the former was perceived as a smaller, more niche publisher – “[t]he University of Natal Press published a small but creditable list with a strong

105 SA Publishing, 'University presses' (n.d.), Available online: http://sapublishing.cet.uct.ac.za/index.php5/University_Presses.

106 N. Basbanes, *A World of Letters: Yale University Press 1908–2008* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 13.

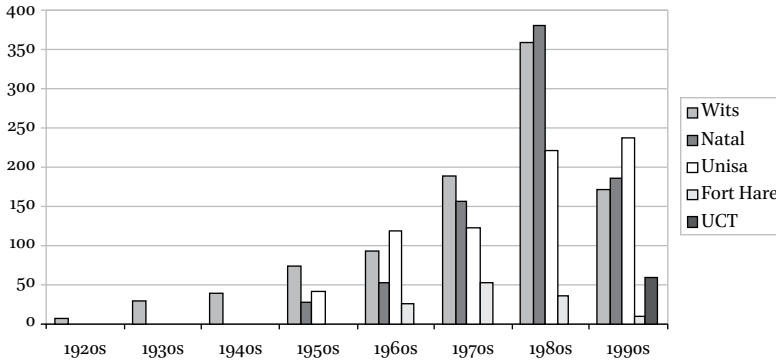


FIGURE 5 *Numbers of titles published per decade*

regional focus,” as Gray puts it.¹⁰⁷ This reflects the difficulties – financial and other – at WUP during this period, especially as a hangover from the 1970s. The graph also shows a marked decline in production in the 1990s, after a peak in the 1980s. The 1990s were a difficult decade for the university presses, as funding models changed, subsidies declined, and the university system was radically reconfigured. In general, publishing in South Africa underwent a slump in the 1990s. In fact, during the 1990s, only Unisa with the insulation of its relatively large subsidy continued to improve its output.

If we drill a level deeper than the overall number of titles produced, in terms of the key categories or themes of books published, it is clear for each of the presses that there has been only a limited attempt at list-building and at niche development. The strengths of the presses generally reflect the research strengths of the parent institutions, and their priorities. At WUP, the top five subjects during the twentieth century were: medical (mostly textbooks), geology, engineering, literature and history, followed by economics. These top five subject areas make up just over half (50.9%) of all titles. At UNP, the top subject areas were economics, history, medical, literature, political science, and agriculture, accounting for 56.2% of all titles. UNP would define its own niche areas in 1987 as history “and related disciplines,” natural sciences, and literature. The top subject area at Unisa, especially from the 1980s, was religion, followed by law, economics, history and literature, with linguistics and education narrowly behind. Again, the top five account for more than half (52.7%) of all titles, with this figure growing to a full two-thirds of all titles published if the top seven categories are included.

107 Gray, ‘Academic Publishing in South Africa,’ p. 177.

This summary reveals the extent of specialisation at the university presses. However, it should not be assumed that this dominance of a few subjects indicates an attempt at list-building, as it rather reflects the universities' general performance in key disciplines, through the dominance of certain departments. In other words, we should be cautious when considering how much is self-initiated, and how much externally imposed. On the whole, the archives reveal that little attention was paid to commissioning at any of the university presses until the late 1980s. The presses have not really taken the opportunity to analyse their own lists, nor to consider their own niches. Rather, they appear to compete on a wide range of topics, and for a limited author pool.

Moreover, if we compare these areas of specialisation to those most commonly found at US university presses – the largest group, and one that has been studied in sufficient detail to allow for comparison – a more nuanced picture emerges. South Africa clearly has a different kind of academic market to that of the US. Parsons has shown that at the US university presses, the top subject areas in the 1990s were history (93% of all presses surveyed listed this as a key publishing area), women's studies (75%), political science (71%), literary criticism (70%), and anthropology (67%).¹⁰⁸ There was a definite preference for the social sciences and humanities. Religion was found as a key area at 51% of the presses, economics at 41%, and medicine at just 40% – in contrast to the South African university presses, which have published widely in these latter fields. It is interesting, too, that South Africa's university presses have not only been active in the 'traditional' areas of the social sciences and humanities, which are considered the mainstay of university press lists.

Another interesting difference relates to the publishing of critical political works. While political science is a very significant publishing area at US university presses, this was found to be far less the case at South Africa's presses. The difference can certainly be attributed, in part, to the constraints imposed by a repressive apartheid government on academic freedom generally and publications specifically. Another factor is the under-development of political science as a discipline at South African universities during the apartheid period.¹⁰⁹ But there is also a difference in how politics is handled at the local presses – as described, it was often regarded as "safer" to publish a text dealing with a historical topic rather than current events, although a historical work can still be critical, even if obliquely. However, while some historians saw history as "a social science with practical applicability" and used their historical studies "to

108 Parsons, Paul, 'Specialization by university presses,' *Book Research Quarterly*, 6(2) (1990).

109 Adam, 'Predicaments and opinions.'

make the transition from historical conclusion to current political comment,”¹¹⁰ this was not the case for many academics and their publications. In the changing political environment, scholarly publishing in South Africa thus tended to steer clear of controversial (and politically dangerous) topics.

Indeed, there is such a lack of specialisation and so much overlapping that it appears that the university presses have been driven more by unsolicited manuscripts than by a rational analysis of their own strengths. This problem has been recognised for some time, with a recommendation in 1972 that UNP should move away from its “miscellaneous collection of different subjects” towards specialisation, for instance in the early history of Natal.¹¹¹ In the 1980s, too, various proposals were made for WUP to pursue a more aggressive acquisitions policy. For instance, a Publications Committee Working Group was set up to consider changes in publishing philosophy, and it recommended a more active commissioning policy in three key areas: African studies, the research strengths of Wits University, and textbooks for both students and schools.¹¹² Over time, a shift towards more commissioned work and a more focused acquisitions policy is visible, but this remains something of a weakness among the university presses.

Conclusion

Over time, the positions and publishing strategies adopted by the South African university presses shifted, becoming increasingly liberal and even, to some degree, oppositional. A shift in publishing strategies may be seen, from a liberal tone and a focus on non-controversial topics (privatism), to more engaged, ‘militant-radical’ or ‘political reform’ publications. Perhaps the most significant finding of this chapter is the degree of flux in the intellectual responses of the presses over the years, showing more conservatism than anticipated among the so-called open universities, and more liberalism (or repressive tolerance) than expected at the more hegemonically aligned university, Unisa. While there is not much evidence to show a marked change in editorial policy, the late apartheid period signalled a growing political awareness at both WUP and UNP. Indeed, in UNP’s Press Committee minutes, the item literally appears on the agenda in 1988: “Alternative publishing.” (The terse

¹¹⁰ Smith, *The Changing Past*, p. 111.

¹¹¹ Notes on Meetings of AP&PC.

¹¹² ‘Report of the Publications Committee Working Group’ (Unpublished report, 1984), WUA S84/280, p. 421.

comment followed: "Agreed that nothing should be done in this regard at this stage."¹¹³ In 1988, too, director Mobbs Moberly signed a statement from a group of South African publishers "affirming the freedom to publish."¹¹⁴

However, there were constraints. The production value chain at the university's was heavily influenced by their missions, and by the missions and agendas of their parent institutions. For instance, the subvention of the presses was closely linked to the kinds of publications they were expected to produce – a direct influence on their attempts at list-building. Thus, even where university presses may have sought to play a more oppositional or progressive role through their publishing output, they were often constrained by the university's demand that they provide services to the parent institution. Thus, while it has often been contended that these presses resisted the repressive forces of apartheid, in fact, oppositional or activist academics rather tended towards publishing abroad or with the independent publishers. While there was an atmosphere of repression, state censorship and the banning of books, the degree of interference in the university presses appears to have been minimal. Strict control of publishing would have been difficult and costly, and it seems more likely that the presses practised a form of self-censorship: "The effects of apartheid turn out to be not simply the direct results of discrimination or of repressions, but to be also indirectly articulated through informal selection, through the production and reproduction of a certain knowledge."¹¹⁵ Certainly, what Sapiro terms "extra-intellectual values" would also have had an effect on the selection and certification roles of the university presses.¹¹⁶

The discussion of oppositional publishing reveals the difficulties of applying a conventional book history model, such as that of Darnton or of Adams and Barker, to an unconventional publishing model.¹¹⁷ For a start, neither model makes space for what should go even before the phase of 'publication' – the strategy, mission and orientation of the publisher. This may be because neither model places the publisher, as an organisation, at the centre of their model. Rather, in the case of Darnton, the focus falls on all the individuals involved in the production of a book, while Adams and Barker emphasise the book itself as the central figure. This study, in contrast, is an examination of

113 Minutes of meeting of the Press Committee (23 March 1988), UNP.

114 Minutes of meeting of the Press Committee (18 August 1988), UNP.

115 J. Rex (ed.), *Apartheid and Social Research* (Paris: Unesco, 1981), p. ii.

116 G. Sapiro, 'The literary field between the state and the market,' *Poetics*, 31 (2003), p. 449.

117 Robert Darnton, 'What is the history of books?,' *Daedalus*, 111 (3) (1982), pp. 65–83; Thomas Adams and Nicholas Barker, 'A New Model for the Study of the Book,' in Nicholas Barker (ed.), *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society* (London: British Library, 1993).

publishers, and while both individuals and books are of importance, they are subsumed within a larger, institutional whole. Secondly, while both models mention the presence of political, intellectual and social influences in addition to the economic or commercial pressures, it is difficult to know how to foreground these in a case where commercial motivations are of distinctly secondary importance. Under apartheid, every stage of the publishing process was overshadowed by legislation, government control and at least the threat of censorship or punishment for these publishers. Thirdly, Darnton's model, in particular, envisages a predictable and conventional manufacturing or production process, involving a wide array of actors such as printers, binders, shippers and booksellers. In the international context, the production and distribution of oppositional publications is considerably more varied and less conventional, and may involve a very small group of people fulfilling almost every role. Lastly, the final phases of readership (or reception and survival, in Adams and Barker's terms) are again complicated by the intervention of the government, in the case of banned books or authors. Texts would often 'survive' in unusual or even illegal forms, such as photocopied pages being circulated, while others failed to reach their intended audience.

An important part of both the business model for a publisher, as well as the context for a higher education institution, is the means and source of funding. The universities in South Africa were not autonomous business units, entirely responsible for their own budgets and revenue. Rather, they functioned within a state system, in which they were subject to parliamentary oversight and budgetary control. This limited the scope of what a university could do. Bourdieu has pointed out the link between funding and a publishing list, indicating that, for universities, "[t]he state, after all, has the power to orient intellectual production by means of subsidies, commissions, promotion, honorific posts, even decorations, all of which are for speaking or keeping silent, for compromise or abstention."¹¹⁸ Thus, "[g]overnment authorities make it clear to university officials that continued good relations, budgetary allocations, and research funds depend on the appropriate academic and political behaviour on the part of the faculty."¹¹⁹ This suggests a structural reason for the intellectual responses of academics, and their leaning towards privatism and cautious activism, rather than radicalism.

In turn, the university presses functioned as departments of their respective parent institutions, rather than as autonomous business units. Again, this limited

¹¹⁸ Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods,' p. 27.

¹¹⁹ Philip Altbach (ed.), *The Changing Academic Workplace: Comparative Perspectives* (Boston: Centre for International Higher Education, 2000), p. 270.

the scope of their activities. The primary source of funding was a subvention from their parent institutions; they were then expected to recover costs as far as possible. In recent years, the pressures to become more profitable have grown increasingly intense, with the result that all manuscripts are now evaluated on the basis of academic merit as well as whether they can cover their own costs. Previously, the non-profit orientation of the university presses meant that they did not always operate according to viable business principles. Nonetheless, income was very important for all of the university presses, even if only intended on a cost-recovery basis. The circumscribed sphere in which the university presses operated had a direct effect on their ability to make oppositional publishing decisions; the independence of the oppositional publishers gave them a great deal more freedom when developing their lists. What is similar is that the publishing philosophy of both the university presses and the oppositional publishers is essential for an understanding of their role in the constrained environment of apartheid and its censorship legislation.

Authors and Gatekeeping

The printer's colophon...antedates the writer's signature on the book. When the authorities take action against books, it is their publishers who suffer the greatest material loss; printers rather than authors were the target of the great repressions of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, printers and publishers have never put themselves forward as rivals to the authority of the state. That, significantly, is a role they have allowed their authors to play.¹

Studies of literary output within a repressive environment tend to place the spotlight on freedom of expression. The metaphors used commonly refer to the silencing of voices, to (in)visibility, to exclusion and marginalisation, and to chains, handcuffs and ties. In the South African context, images of resistance also frequently recur. These studies seldom consider the authors of non-literary texts, such as the serious non-fiction produced by university presses. They also seldom examine the role of the publishers and their gatekeeping mechanisms in either giving voice to or silencing authors.

This chapter thus develops an author profile, which raises questions about exclusion and gatekeeping at the university presses. The rest of this chapter will examine the publishing experiences of two specific groups of authors who fall outside of this norm: black authors, and radical authors. The focus thus falls on gatekeeping practices at the university presses, including their peer review policies and practices, as well as their compliance with the censorship regime, and the question of whether or not they resorted to self-censorship.

An Author Profile

There are few models for how to develop an authors' profile for a publishing house. De Glas suggests a set of criteria: an author's attachment or loyalty to a publishing house; the number of titles produced by each author; the profitability of an author; and the author's contribution to the prestige of the publishing house.² However, it is difficult to use such measures to analyse a

1 J.M. Coetzee, 'André Brink and the Censor,' *Research in African Literatures*, 21(3) (1990), p. 69.

2 Frank De Glas, 'Authors' oeuvres as the backbone of publishers' lists: Studying the literary publishing house after Bourdieu,' *Poetics*, 25 (1998), p. 387.

scholarly publishing list, in contrast to the trade fiction lists examined by De Glas. For one thing, few, if any, scholarly authors show any loyalty to a specific university press when publishing; as a result, there is little continuity of attachment of academic authors. Similarly, the second attribute may in fact be negative in the context of scholarly publishing: an author is expected *not* to publish all his or her works with a single press. The third measure is not always relevant in the context of non-profit or cost-recovery publishing, rather than a commercial enterprise built upon profit. The fourth is of clear relevance, but on the whole the most prestigious authors tended not to publish with the local university presses. The most prolific authors, moreover, are not necessarily the same as the most prestigious authors.

Bourdieu's distinction between commercial and non-commercial publishers helps to highlight certain aspects relating to authorship. He makes a distinction between those publishers that are willing to take a risk with new authors, because they emphasise long-term gains, and those that prefer to publish established, best-seller authors, for mass consumption and short-term gain.³ Scholarly publishers and oppositional publishers are more likely to fall on the side of long-term gain, even if in their case the focus is academic merit or political change, rather than literary merit or commercial gain. But Bourdieu's distinction does not hold up when applied to authorship, as university presses tend to prefer established academics as authors, because their works are more likely to stand the test of time. University press books are written by producers and for producers, i.e. for elite consumption, as is the case for scholarly publishing generally. In contrast, radical anti-apartheid publications were written for a wider, mass audience (which was defined politically rather than demographically or by class). Thus, the gatekeeping practices of university presses tend to work in favour of more established authors, and against the publication of young, untested authors. There is a definite leaning towards a conservative, cautious approach in selecting authors and their works. For literary publishing, it has been suggested that, "the imbalance due to a preponderance of older productive authors (who had long given the list its prestige) served to mask the fact that few young authors, who might introduce new idioms or stylistic influences, were being recruited."⁴ More broadly, concerns have been expressed about the ageing cohort of scholarly authors at South African universities.⁵

3 P. Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods,' *Poetics*, 14(1/2) (1985), pp. 13–44.

4 De Glas, 'Authors' oeuvres,' p. 391.

5 Johan Mouton, Nelius Boshoff and Robert Tijssen, 'A Comprehensive Analysis of South African Research Journals,' in *Report on a Strategic Approach to Research Publishing in South Africa* (Pretoria: Assaf, 2006), pp. 48–50.

As a result, in contrast to oppositional publishers, the university presses did not publish many new, untried authors, nor authors who may be considered marginalised. Where there is an overlap in the author profiles of oppositional publishers and the university presses, this is usually a group of established scholars who collaborated to produce outspoken, 'militant-radical' works with oppositional publishers, while publishing their 'safe' research with university presses.

Rather than relying on theoretical criteria for profiling authors, demographic criteria might be used to help to establish the profile of who was publishing at the university presses: the racial classifications of black and white, the distinctions between male and female, the languages used, and the age of authors (such as established as opposed to young or emerging scholars). All of these demographics reflect the power dynamics at work within the institutions themselves as well. This focus on power enables us to examine the unequal access to publishing platforms of different academics. The systemic injustices and divisions of the apartheid period would be expected to be reflected in the author profiles of the university presses in South Africa.

As Merrett notes, "[p]erhaps unsurprisingly, the universities reflected the norms of the society which surrounded them."⁶ It is immediately clear that most of the publications reflected their context in certain ways. The majority of the texts were written by white men, often professors at the universities, and often members of the Publications Committees or other governing bodies (see Figures 6–9). With time, there was a gradual increase in the number of female authors, as well as black scholars, and a small but noticeable international contingent as well. For instance, WUP's publishing output in this period was not only racially stratified – publishing white academics almost exclusively – but the selection of authors was also highly gendered. As far as women are concerned, WUP published some very distinguished academics, such as the botanist Maria Breyer-Brandwijk, the sociologist Hilda Kuper, and the coal scientist and palaeobotanist Edna Plumstead. Edna Janisch first self-published her *Section Drawing from Simple Geological Maps* in 1933, but later editions were published by WUP in 1938 and 1946. In 1960, WUP published the work of the first woman professor at Wits, Heather Martienssen of the Department of Fine Arts. But, while the numbers of female professors and authors grew over the years, there remained a distinct imbalance in the author profile throughout the apartheid period, with an inclination towards the publication of white men.

6 C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip and University of Natal Press, 1994), p. 103.

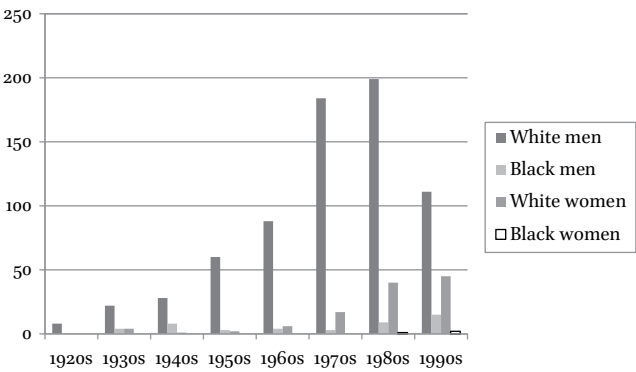


FIGURE 6 *Author profile by race and gender, WUP*

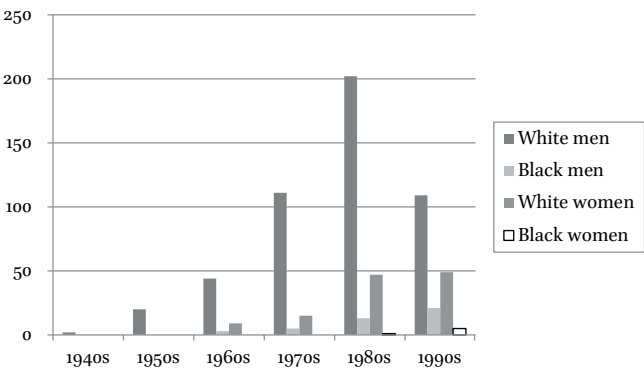


FIGURE 7 *Author profile by race and gender, UNP*

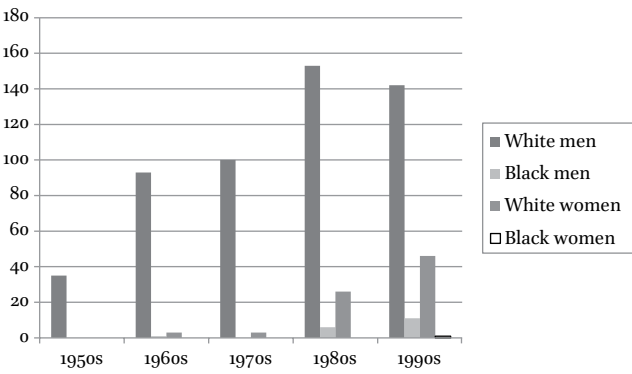


FIGURE 8 *Author profile by race and gender, Unisa*

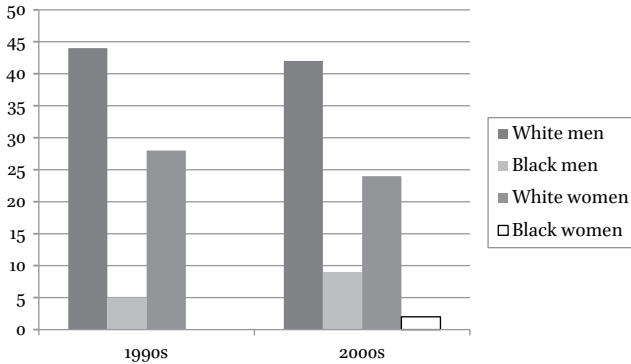


FIGURE 9 Author profile by race and gender, UCT Press

This is similar to other sectors of academic publishing, where the majority of authors – Galloway and Venter put the figure at over 80%⁷ – for the greater part of the twentieth century were senior, white, male academics. This is unsurprising in the sense that the universities in South Africa were largely homogenous communities – overwhelmingly white, male, English or Afrikaans-speaking and privileged. We should guard against seeing this group as entirely homogenous, since, as the previous chapter showed, there was a fluidity in attitudes and subject positions. But they nonetheless formed the cultural and numerical majority within the sphere of the universities, in stark contrast to their position as minorities in South African society. This society was extremely heterogeneous and, indeed, highly unequal. As a result, I argue, the university presses supported only a small elite – not necessarily a political elite, but certainly a cultural and intellectual one – as authors in their publishing programmes. Indeed, the focus of this study may be seen as the output of elite groups, as those without access to university press publishing fall outside the scope of the research. Their voices are not carried through this channel.

White men, then, were seen as the norm among authors submitting manuscripts for consideration by the university presses. In other forms of publishing, the same effect pertained: “Afrikaans, English and black authors [have] had very different publishing possibilities”:

The constraints imposed on them differed in terms of the regime of the day and their respective reader pools. English authors had few publishing

7 F. Galloway and R. Venter, ‘Book history, publishing research and production figures: The case of Afrikaans fiction production during the transitional period 1990–2003,’ *South African Historical Journal*, 55 (2006), pp. 46–65.

opportunities within South Africa, and were mainly published by British and American publishers. They had to fight for South African English to be accepted as worthy publishing medium, and were struggling to create an indigenous literature in English. Through the apartheid state, black authors were especially repressed, and, out of necessity, they turned to literary magazines in order to be published. Afrikaans was published aggressively....⁸

This is true also for scholarly publishing in South Africa, and may be seen in the demographic make-up of the author profiles of the university presses. Figures 6–9 depict the author profiles of the presses, according to the variables of race and gender based on information derived from the bibliographies compiled for the presses.

The figures are remarkably consistent, given that they plot the producers of knowledge and the publications output at four very different institutions. Using a timescale to plot shifts in the author profiles over time, we see an overwhelming bias towards white male authors through the whole period. While the figures do show a distinct trend of growth in the numbers of white female authors, and some growth among black male authors as well towards the end of the period, they also show the continuing dominance of white men as authors of South African scholarly books. It is only in the 1990s that black women academics really started to make an impact as a category, yet still on a very small scale and off a very low base. With only a small elite functioning as suppliers for university presses, the author pool was very small, and remains under-developed even today.

Black Authors

As early as 1945, R.H.W. Shepherd of Lovedale was extolling the principle that “Bantu (sic) authors should be encouraged as much as possible.”⁹ As a result, the author profile of the Lovedale Press is impressive, including many of the greatest black authors in South Africa – almost entirely men, it should be mentioned. But Shepherd went further, convening meetings and workshops for

8 J.J.H. Deysel, ‘The subversive Afrikaner: An exploration into the subversive stance of the little magazine *Stet* (1982–1991)’ (MA thesis, University of Pretoria, 2007), p. 11.

9 R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu: A brief history and a forecast* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1945), p. 17.

black authors, sometimes in collaboration with academics at Wits, such as J.D. Rheinalt Jones and Clement Doke of the Department of Bantu Studies. The university presses have not had such an impressive record in respect of developing black authors.

WUP's essential conservatism may be seen in the low numbers of black authors published – the usual author profile was one of white, male authors. The first black author published by WUP was the Reverend John Henderson Soga in 1930. But by far the most black authors were published through the channel of the flagship Bantu Treasury Series. Through this series, WUP came to support a certain intellectual elite: those published in the Bantu Treasury Series – Benedict Vilakazi, James Ranisi Jolobe, Sol T. Plaatje, and Nimrod Ndebele, among others – would go on to become important figures in a literary renaissance. Broadly classified under the grouping of the 'New African Movement,' they were highly educated men (there were no women published in the series) with both a cultural and a political mission undergirding their writing. Masilela notes that, 'The New African Movement was preoccupied with the historical project of constructing modernity in South Africa,' and suggests that such black intellectuals appropriated European ideas to empower themselves – including the use of literature to raise the standard of their civilisation.¹⁰ It is thus an over-simplification to consider the black writers in the Bantu Treasury Series to be restricted to the margins, because they formed an elite in their own right, even while operating within a restricted environment.

James Jolobe, for instance, a Minister of Religion who was educated at Fort Hare, wrote two volumes that were published by Clement Doke in the series – *Umyezo* ('An orchard,' a collection of isiXhosa poetry, in 1926) and *Amavo* ('Old traditional stories,' 1941). *Amavo* has been labelled "the first collection of essays by an Nguni writer."¹¹ His writing was also brought out by other publishers, including mission presses like Lovedale Press, and he served on the editorial board of the religious journal, *South African Outlook*. Jolobe also played an important role in the compilation and translation of the English-Xhosa-Afrikaans dictionary; so that, like Vilakazi, he combined academic interests in his language and culture with creative writing.

Another significant author was published in 1942, when Samuel Mqhayi's *Inzuzo* ('Reward') came out in the series. Mqhayi is now known as the 'father of Xhosa poetry' and 'the greatest of all isiXhosa praise poets,' with the title

10 Ntongela Masilela, 'South African language literatures' (Unpublished essay, 2009), Available online: <http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/NAM/general/essays/language-literatures.pdf>.

11 Albert S. Gérard, *Four African Literatures: Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu and Amharic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

Imbongi yesizwe jikelele, 'the poet of the whole nation.'¹² He had been publishing literary and biographical works since 1914, and was thus very well established by the time of his inclusion in the series. Doke himself considered Mqhayi 'the outstanding writer of Xhosa today,' and the two shared an interest in the standardisation of the indigenous languages in South Africa.¹³ Although now remembered as a protest poet, this was not Mqhayi's image in the 1940s.¹⁴

It could be argued that WUP, like other white-owned publishers in South Africa, was contributing to the white commodification of black literature, packaging these iconic black authors for specific audiences. And, at the same time as these distinguished black authors were being published, Wits continued to publish a wide range of titles by white liberal authors. Black authors were almost exclusively confined to the fields of either literature or linguistics. Indeed, it is only in the late 1980s that the list opens up to include black authors on a wider range of topics, including nursing, health policy studies, migrants, and education. A similar trend may be identified at all of the university presses.

Natal's university press did not actively seek out black authors, perhaps because unlike WUP it did not actively publish local literature or African languages in its earlier years. But UNP is notable for the publication of Indian authors, and of publications dealing with Indian issues. This is largely related to its location in KwaZulu-Natal, and its enduring interest in regional matters.

The first publication by a black author at UNP was the text of a short lecture given at the university, *A Review of Zulu Literature* by C.L. Sibusiso Nyembezi (1961). Cyril Nyembezi was a lecturer in African languages and literature at Wits University at this time, and was also published by WUP, with *Zulu Proverbs*, in 1954. He had previously lectured at Fort Hare, but resigned his post in protest against the Extension of Education Act of 1959.

UNP followed this publication with an anthropological work by Absolom Vilakazi, *Zulu Transformations: A Study of the Dynamics of Social Change* in 1962. The latter book was described in a 1969 catalogue as: "the first work by an African student in the field of Social Anthropology to be published in the Republic of South Africa. Written 'from the inside,' the material has a reality about it which is frequently lacking in anthropological books."¹⁵ A review by Hilda Kuper simi-

12 J. Opland, 'The first novel in Xhosa,' *Research in African Literatures*, 38(4) (2007), pp. 87–110.

13 Clement Doke, 'Vernacular Text-Books in South African Native Schools,' *Africa*, 8(2) (1935), p. 193.

14 Mncedisi Qangule, 'Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi,' in Mcebisi Ndletyana (ed.), *African Intellectuals in 19th and early 20th-century South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008), p. 64.

15 University of Natal Press book list (1969), UNA, p. 3.

lary overtly mentions the author's race and ethnicity (as a black, Zulu man), signalling just how unusual this publication was for the time. She notes, in an overt mention of the author rather than his work: "it is not usual to consider the background of a particular field worker pertinent to a review of his monograph," before going on to add that "it is useful if not essential to know that, as he deliberately indicates, he himself is a Zulu and a Christian, as well as a trained anthropologist who presented *Zulu Transformation* (sic) for a doctoral thesis to the University of Natal, South Africa."¹⁶ (Kuper herself was an established female academic, who was published by both WUP and UNP.)

Another unusual publishing selection at UNP was the decision to publish an English translation of a classic isiZulu text in 1978. Unlike WUP and its Bantu Treasury Series, UNP was not known for publishing such literature, but its association with the Killie Campbell Africana Library led to several classic works being revived. The years 1977 to 1980 also saw a flurry of books emerging from a number of publishers, not least UNP, to commemorate the centenary of the Anglo-Zulu War. Thus, in 1978 H.C. Lugg's translation of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* by Magema Fuze was published, as *The Black People and Whence they Came: A Zulu View*. First published in 1922 in isiZulu, the text had not been available in English translation for more than 50 years and remained virtually unknown in scholarly and political circles, largely due to the constraints of language.

Fuze is now seen as a pioneer black intellectual, but at the time it was considered necessary to filter and introduce the text through a white lens. Hlonipha Mokoena has commented on the ways in which the translator repositioned the text in a certain light: for instance, as literature and oral history rather than an authoritative history. She comments that the editor, A.T. Cope, "divided the text into categories not present in the original work: ethnography, history and Zulu history," and that various excisions, alterations and judgements were made on the work by the translator and editor – editorial interventions that came about through the mediation of the publishing process.¹⁷ "Implicit in this approach," Mokoena continues, "is the tendency of the translator, editor and other commentators to annotate the text with supplementary information and 'corrections,' which emphasise the errors of the author." The editor and translator also explicitly positioned the text historically and geographically, as the "first book ever written by an African of this Province [Natal]."¹⁸ In contrast to

16 Hilda Kuper, 'Review of *Zulu Transformations*,' *American Anthropologist*, 66 (1964), p. 183.

17 Hlonipha Mokoena, 'An Assembly of Readers: Magema Fuze and his *Ilanga lase Natal* Readers,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35(3) (2009), p. 597.

18 Quoted in *Ibid.*

this view, a contemporary reviewer found that “[i]n Professor Cope, Fuze has a sympathetic and unobtrusive editor,”¹⁹ and this was generally supported by other reviews as well.²⁰ The role of the white editor or mediator is thus significant when examining the positioning of black authors in apartheid South Africa.

At Unisa, the author profile was dramatically skewed towards white male authors. Indeed, by 1964, the members of the Publications Committee also constituted the majority of authors published, including Professors D.R. Beeton, M.J. Posthumus and H.J. de Vleeschauwer. The first black author to be published was A.C. Nkabinde, with his linguistic study, *Some Aspects of Foreign Words in Zulu* (1968). Nkabinde was an important figure in the field of linguistics, as well as later becoming the first black rector of the University of Zululand. He was also chairperson of the Language Subcommittee of the SABC Board. This was followed in 1972, by the *Handbook of the Venda Language* (with the co-authors Dirk Ziervogel, P.J. Wentzel and T.N. Makuya), and in 1973, by *Xironga Folk-Tales* (compiled by Erdmann J.M. Baumbach and C.T.D. Marivate). It appears that black authors were seen as most acceptable when writing about their own languages, although at Unisa even this was tempered by the co-authorship of white linguists. The next single-authored text by a black author was published only in 1984 – a theological text on *God's Creative Activity Through the Law* by Simon Maimela. Nor was this an opening of the flood-gates; such authors remained few and far between until the early 1990s, a reflection of the slower rate of change at Unisa, perhaps.

This means, in effect, that even the liberal and oppositional texts published by the university presses were written by white authors. Kgware bemoaned the fact that “even research work at the Black universities is carried out by white academics,”²¹ a situation that many see as continuing into the post-apartheid era.²² Raymond Suttner has noted, especially of the 1960s, that, “[b]ecause state repression was primarily directed at black political activities, this was a period when (mainly white) liberal and university political activities achieved considerable prominence, more or less in isolation from blacks, but also, in a

19 Ruth Edgecombe, ‘Review: *The Black People and Whence they Came*,’ *Natalia*, 10 (1980), p. 67.

20 For instance, in the *Journal of Religion in Africa* and *The Witness*.

21 W.M. Kgware, ‘The role of Black Universities in South Africa,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 234.

22 Jonathan Jansen argues that “black intellectuals do not enjoy the same access to leading publishing houses and resources as do white intellectuals.” Jonathan Jansen, ‘Hard times: The (self-imposed) crisis of the black intellectual,’ *Indicator SA*, 20(1) (2003), p. 11.

sense, as surrogates for black opposition.”²³ He sees one of the consequences as the “artificial prominence” of white liberal academics.

This finding is not entirely surprising, given that the staff compositions of the universities consisted largely of white men, and access to various aspects of academia and knowledge production (including the university presses) was controlled by white men. In fact, “the open universities were overwhelmingly staffed, administratively and academically, by whites, the majority of whom had political views which were probably little different from those of the large body of white South Africans. Most would have deemed themselves committed to academic freedom; only a small minority, before the early 1990s, would have been committed to majority rule. Theirs was a liberalism which was qualified by their socialisation into, and location in, a situation of racial privilege. In short, theirs was a ‘racial liberalism.’”²⁴ This white domination of academia and its processes, Evans argues, led to the “exclusion of blacks from shaping the intellectual life of South Africa.”²⁵ However, Mamdani has criticised the universities for not doing more to cultivate a black academic cohort, arguing that “[t]here was a native intelligentsia, but it was to be found mainly outside universities, in social movements or religious institutions” and that this intelligentsia “functioned without institutional support.”²⁶

As a result, there were perilously few potential black authors, given the presses’ inward-looking stance when soliciting manuscripts and their faculties’ being closed to staff from certain racial groups. Black academics were limited by the restrictions of the segregated higher education system. This restricted their access to education, and also their knowledge production and publishing opportunities. The legislated segregation of black and white academics into separate institutions in effect introduced an additional level of exclusion when it came to publishing as well; the main barrier to the publication of marginalised groups was structural and systemic, as Taylor points out:

The lack of critical black intellectual work is primarily related to the fact that blacks in South Africa, due to apartheid, lack adequate access to

23 Raymond Suttner, ‘The Freedom Charter: The People’s Charter in the 1980s,’ *Crime and Social Justice*, 24 (1985), p. 73.

24 Roger Southall and Julian Cobbing, ‘From Racial Liberalism to Corporate Authoritarianism: The Shell Affair and the Assault on Academic Freedom in South Africa,’ *Social Dynamics*, 27(2) (2001), p. 5.

25 I. Evans, ‘The Racial Question and Intellectual Production in South Africa,’ *Perspectives in Education*, 11(2) (1990), p. 23.

26 Quoted in Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 12.

higher education and institutional bases from which critical work can be developed. Specifically at university level the structures of apartheid restrict the small number of black students who can benefit from higher education at the black 'universities,' the type of education they receive at these institutions and access to the 'open' universities.²⁷

The structure of higher education thus contributed to the "patterning of the racial and ideological composition of academic staff," as Badat notes. He provides figures to back this statement up:

In 1970, black academics represented only 19.1% (87) of total academic staff at black universities, and in 1974, 28.8% (161). White conservatives dominated top posts. At the African universities, in 1979 only nine out of 105 professors and 14 out of 146 senior lecturers were black. Only at junior level was there greater parity – 89 white and 73 African lecturers.²⁸

Margo Russell provides similarly skewed figures, noting that "South African universities in 1950 were essentially white institutions," with just 47 black faculty out of a total of 2 000 (2.3% of the total).²⁹ By the mid-1960s, the ratio had improved modestly to 8%. Even so, black academic staff were largely employed only on a temporary and junior basis.

The lack of black authors is not only due to the limited pool of black academics, but also to the marginalisation of black academics. Indeed, it has been argued that "...the normal structuring of the academic debate is affected by the way in which Black academics are excluded from the mainstream of (South) African life or at least from playing a major part in it...while the Afrikaans universities excluded the Black academic from research altogether, the English-speaking universities used him in a subordinate role to collect data on projects conceived by his White masters."³⁰ This role may certainly be seen in the historically black universities in South Africa, where a disproportionate teaching load was placed on the shoulders of black academics, while the (often white) professors were free to concentrate on research and publication.

27 Rupert Taylor, 'The narrow ground: Critical intellectual work on South Africa under apartheid,' *Critical Arts*, 5 (4) (1991), p. 31.

28 S. Badat, *Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008), p. 72.

29 Margo Russell, 'Intellectuals and academic apartheid 1950–1965,' in P. van der Berghe (ed.), *The Liberal Dilemma in South Africa* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979), p. 137.

30 J. Rex (ed.), *Apartheid and Social Research* (Paris: Unesco, 1981), p. 19.

By the 1980s, when there was both increased government crackdown and a policy of 'repressive tolerance,' Wits University Press began to describe its role as "service to Black writers and students."³¹ In the same period, WUP's editorial policy began to change. There was a growing feeling that "service" to the University was over-emphasised and that it should be replaced with an aggressive and competitive policy of more commercial publishing. There was some disagreement, it seems, as to whether the Press required "a new role and a new policy" allowing it to "operate as a profit-earning trade publisher similar to Ravan, David Philip or Ad Donker" – significantly, all of the publishers named here were oppositional publishers – or whether "[t]he new policy should not be seen as an attempt to convert the Press into a profit-earning trade publisher, but rather as an attempt to wean academics at the University to the idea that there are advantages in publishing their scholarly work through the Press."³² At this late stage, an attempt was thus made to facilitate participation in the publishing process by groups other than the 'norm.' The effects may be seen in the slow, but distinct, trend towards the great inclusion of black and female authors over time, at both WUP and the other university presses.

This implies that, in effect, the legislated segregation of black and white academics into separate academic institutions meant that the university presses applied a gatekeeping and selection function even before peer review. Thus, the main barrier to the publication of marginalised groups was both structural and systemic. As a result, the grossly inferior facilities for black academics at what are now known as the historically black universities included inferior and limited access to publication or dissemination outlets.

In the apartheid period, the vast majority of publishers were white-owned and managed, while a number of the most important authors published were black. John K. Young has theorised about the significance of this relationship in the American context, in his book, *Black Writers, White Publishers*. He notes that, "what sets the white publisher-black author relationship apart is the underlying social structure that transforms the usual unequal relationship into an extension of a much deeper cultural dynamic," and goes on to analyse "the ways in which a concentration of money and cultural authority in mainstream publishers works to produce images of blackness that perpetuate an implicit black-white divide between authors and readers, with publishers acting as a gateway in this interaction."³³ Young's work illustrates the extent to which

31 Wilson, 'Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,' p. 1.

32 Ibid., p. 4.

33 John K. Young, *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African-American Literature* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), pp. 4, 6.

black authors have negotiated white power structures in order to reach their audience, through a complex act of confrontation, collaboration and even compromise. While much of what Young describes applies equally well to the South African situation as to the American, there are certain important differences. For instance, the missions of the oppositional publishers aimed not to perpetuate divides among racial groups, but to overcome them – indeed to overthrow a racially oppressive government in so doing. Moreover, Young's description relies largely on a white-dominated publishing industry representing "blackness" to an implicitly white audience, but this was not the case to the same extent in South Africa.

What is interesting to note is that this situation, of black writers and white publishers, has persisted in this country. While black writers and leaders in South Africa have called for more black-owned publishing houses, these have on the whole either failed to materialise or not survived. This is a matter that requires further research, to ascertain the reasons for their failure and to consider whether there is still a need for racially distinct publishing houses that could enable black authors to reach out to their readers without the mediation of white publishers. Kgware warns of the dangers of a narrow author pool: "Unless we [black academics] engage more vigorously in research and publication we may find we have lost our freedom as academics not through restriction but through neglect."³⁴

Publishing Struggle Activists

Another important group of academics is the radical dissidents. On the whole, these fall outside of the continuum described in this study, as they tended to be most active outside the academic sphere altogether. Moreover, a number of significant anti-apartheid and activist academics chose not to publish their work at the university presses, turning instead to the independent oppositional presses. In other words, their contribution cannot be captured from an analysis of publishing lists. As precise reasons are unclear, speculations may only be made on the basis of observations. For example, Richard Turner of Wits published his work titled *The Eye of the Needle* with Spro-Cas / Ravan in 1972, instead of at WUP. Similarly, Eddie Roux published only his most scholarly and apolitical work with WUP: the uncontroversial *Veld and the Future*, in 1963, as his PhD was in plant physiology. And WUP was able to publish some of the less controversial and more academically neutral works of Peter Randall, on the

34 Kgware, 'The role of Black Universities,' p. 232.

theme of education, after he had been banned and forced to leave Ravan Press and had taken up academic work at Wits.

A catalogue of scholarly books banned reveals some of the more common publishers for such radical academics: these included international university presses and commercial academic publishers.³⁵ For instance, Leo Kuper's *An African Bourgeoisie* was published by an international university press (Yale) in 1964; Hans Kohn and Wallace Sokolsky published *African Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* with the US commercial academic publisher Van Nostrand in 1965; Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido edited *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa* for Longman in 1988; and in the same year, Harold Wolpe published *Race, Class and the Apartheid State* for James Currey (co-published with the Organisation of African Unity's InterAfrican Cultural Fund and Unesco Press, but not a South African publisher). The oppositional publishers, Ravan and David Philip in particular, were also seen as options. A senior academic remembers that, during the 1980s, radical academics from Wits and Natal tended to publish all of their work at Ravan.³⁶

Publishers like Ravan were deliberately provocative, in that their aim was to publish critical voices, progressive ideas and books that gave ordinary people a sense of their power. They thus published many young, untried authors and used various experimental formats, such as what came to be known as protest literature or the 'proemdra' (a combination of prose, poetry and drama). These formats are seldom associated with more mainstream publishers, perhaps in part because some of these ventures were subsidised or partly donor-funded: "The alternative publishers could afford the financial risk of dabbling in odd ventures and as a result discover new authors – Ravan Press published J.M. Coetzee's first novel *Dusklands* – because they had foreign funding in support of the cause of anti-apartheid."³⁷ Given the high calibre of many of the authors published, it may be noted that oppositional publishers not only served a marginalised group of authors, but also a mainstream group of authors whose *ideas* were marginalised because they contradicted government policies. Moreover, in addition to experimental formats and fiction, several oppositional publishers also made a name for themselves publishing non-fiction, in particular history and political commentary. While some of the titles were popular in orientation, others were more academic. This brought them into direct competition with the university presses.

35 Listed in Antoon De Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide, 1945 to 1990* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 431.

36 Personal correspondence with A. Grundlingh (20 February 2012).

37 L-M. Greyling, 'Redefining the dialogue of criticism: The creative role of the editor (A South African perspective)' (MA dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2003), p. 56.

Thus, during a review of WUP in 1987, questions were asked as to why so many Wits academics were publishing at Ravan Press, specifically. The response from the manager, Nora Wilson, was that academics had become impatient with the Press's refereeing procedures, finding them too scholarly, too rigorous, and too drawn out in time. Moreover, she argued that there was a perception that Ravan had a more radical image and better distribution. It was thus found more acceptable internationally, at a time when there was an academic boycott, for a local academic seeking a publishing outlet.³⁸

As a result, the radical academics tended to be published by the recognised oppositional publishers, such as Ravan Press and David Philip Publishers, or else turned to international publishing houses. Some academics were unsuccessful in having manuscripts accepted overseas during the academic boycott, and they sometimes turned to the local presses as an alternative. On the whole, though, where we do find them published by the local university presses, it is either in the form of uncontroversial academic work, or under the auspices of academic freedom lecture series. The latter series were commonly found at a number of universities – such as the T.B. Davie academic freedom series (UCT), the E.G. Malherbe academic freedom series (Natal) or the Edgar Brookes memorial lecture series (Natal) – and provided a channel for dissenting, or at least less compliant, voices. They were published by the university presses, however, more in the spirit of service to their parent institutions than as a channel for oppositional publishing. What this suggests is that the university presses did not have the standing – the cultural capital, to use Bourdieu's term – to attract politically outspoken authors. This clearly would affect the author profiles of the university presses, as well as a bias towards more conservative work.

Some academics chose to publish both at oppositional or international publishers, as well as at their university presses. For instance, Shula Marks, even while based overseas, tended to seek South African co-publishers wherever possible for her titles, including *Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness* (WUP, 1986); *Not either an experimental doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women. Correspondence of Lily Moya, Mabel Palmer and Sibusisiwe Makhanya* (UNP, 1987); and *Divided Sisterhood: Race, Class and Gender in the South African Nursing Profession* (WUP, 1994). Similarly, Lawrence Schlemmer, a well-known liberal academic, published a number of titles with UNP, as well as with SPRO-CAS and Ravan Press. The eminent Edgar Brookes also published a few titles with UNP, but his major study, *Apartheid: A Documentary Study of Modern Africa*, was published by Routledge in London in 1968. The main aim for such scholars was the

38 Wilson, quoted in 'Review of WUP' (Unpublished archival report, 1987), WUA S87/415, pp. 2–3.

widespread dissemination, at an affordable price and through accessible channels, of their work in South Africa. By following such a strategy, they could produce both more rigorous scholarly work and more outspoken work, by using different channels. Texts would thus deliberately be placed with different kinds of publishers.

However, it should not be assumed that only the radical academics elected not to publish their work with the university presses. Examples may also be provided of numerous other academics – from across the political spectrum – who published both at the university presses associated with their own institutions, and with other publishers. A significant example is the influential history textbook, *500 Years: A History of South Africa*, which was edited by C.F.J. Muller, Head of the Department of History at Unisa. The textbook was published by H&R Academica (in 1968 for the first Afrikaans edition, and in 1969 for the first English edition), not at Unisa Press. Several of Muller's other works were also not published at Unisa, and one of his most important works, *Die Oorsprong van die Groot Trek* ('The Origins of the Great Trek'), was first published by Tafelberg in 1974, and only later by Unisa (1987). Even before the apartheid period, moreover, there was a common pattern of important academics publishing their work at international publishers. A good example is that of the prominent academic E.G. Malherbe, who had a series initiated in his name at the University of Natal, but chose to publish his own, often controversial, work overseas – e.g. *The Bilingual School* (Longmans, 1946). Similarly, and even earlier, E.J. Krige published *The Social System of the Zulus* with Longmans in 1936, with support from Wits.

In other words, the perceived political leaning of a publisher was certainly not the only factor for an academic making a publishing decision. More significantly, it has always been considered important to the career of a South African academic to publish overseas, so as to reach a wider audience. With the ongoing perception that the local university presses could not offer such distribution nor such prestige, the pool of titles offered to them would always be limited.

Gatekeeping

The selection of authors implies an important gatekeeping role: "The publishing house determines who is 'part of the scene,' who can call themselves a 'writer;' the publishing house regulates the appearance of works on the market, coaches the author, decides who will continue to be published."³⁹ It has

39 De Glas, 'Authors' oeuvres,' p. 386.

been established that the local university presses did not, to a great extent, provide a publishing outlet either for black academics or for white anti-apartheid academics. Part of the reason lies in the structure of higher education, as discussed, and in the preferences of academics themselves, but it is important to ascertain whether the gatekeeping practices of the university presses – such as peer review, censorship and self-censorship – also played a role. The selection practices of the presses may reflect what Keenan has characterised as “open minds and closed systems” at the universities.⁴⁰

Black academics tend to mistrust peer review, usually based on anecdotal evidence of bias and censorship. There may be good reason for such scepticism, as Biagioli points out: “While today it is said that peer review ensures the readers of the trustworthiness of the text in front of them, and assures taxpayers that their monies have been put to good use by scientists, its genealogy suggests that, at first, the interests protected by peer review were primarily those of the state and its academies, not those of the broader scientific or scholarly community.”⁴¹

Peer review, like censorship, aims to delineate what may and may not be published. In countries where state censorship has persisted into the modern era, it is perhaps not surprising that a continuing link between review and censorship has been posited, with the reviewer acting as an unofficial ‘agent’ for the state censors, in a sense. It has been alleged that in South Africa, especially under the apartheid government, peer review was used as a tool and a pretext for advancing non-literary and non-academic agendas – what Sapiro terms “extra-intellectual values.”⁴² To some extent, as with the early introduction of peer review, this could be ascribed to the circularity of funding: the state subsidisation of research conducted at the universities, and of the publishing of that research. Moreover, peer review is usually coordinated or overseen by a Publications Committee, which, like other managerial groups in a university, will be dominated by particular interest groups and based on certain values. Such a committee would also, for the majority of the apartheid period, have been all-white and, for a long time, all-male, at the South African university presses.

An examination of the peer review policies at the university presses shows that, while review was considered important from an early stage, it was unevenly applied in a closed system of inputs and outputs. The imperative of

40 J.H. Keenan, ‘Open minds and closed systems: Comments on the functions and future of the urban English-speaking university in South Africa,’ *Social Dynamics*, 6(2) (1981), pp. 36–47.

41 M. Biagioli, ‘From Book Censorship to Academic Peer Review,’ *Emergences*, 12(2) (2002), p. 17.

42 G. Sapiro, ‘The literary field between the state and the market,’ *Poetics*, 31 (2003), p. 449.

promoting research at the universities in South Africa, and of publishing the work of local academics, had clear implications for peer review. As Roberts points out, “[w]ithout some sort of rigorous mechanism for judging academic work on an international basis, the publication of scholarly articles and monographs can become a somewhat incestuous, sheltered process.”⁴³ This was a common problem at university presses, especially in their early years, and may be seen replicated in the early works published and early practices followed by WUP, Unisa and Natal.

WUP early established a system of accepting or rejecting works on the basis of “academic merit,” using readers for their potential manuscripts from as early as 1931. As early as the 1930s, too, they were aware of the political potential of peer review: “Resolved. (a) to request Professors Maingard, Stammers and Van den Heever to read the book and report to the Principal whether it is likely to harm the University by exacerbating racial feeling and (b) if the reports under (a) are satisfactory to recommend that the University agree to sponsor the publication.”⁴⁴ The book in question was Dr Ian MacCrone’s *Race Attitudes in South Africa*, later published by OUP with sponsorship from Wits.

The Wits Publications Committee also resolved to pay readers for their work, suggesting a £5 honorarium in 1938.⁴⁵ Remarkably, this amount was not changed for more than twenty years, until 1960, when it was increased to £10 for readers not employed by the University.⁴⁶ In October 1968, the fee was extended to both internal and external readers, and in March 1969 was increased to a maximum of R50.

During this period, the criteria for selection of books were based on both merit and the likely market for the books, especially for external authors. In 1959, the standards for accepting manuscripts were set out in the Minutes of the Publications Committee, as follows: (i) two referee reports would be required; (ii) examiners’ reports (in the case of PhD dissertations) would not be accepted in lieu of referee reports; and (iii) a book would, in general, not be accepted for publication until it was ready for the press.⁴⁷ The evidence of reader reports in the WUP archives reveals close reading, based on questions of academic merit and relevance. On the whole, these standard peer review mechanisms have worked well as a quality control mechanism, but there have

43 P. Roberts, ‘Scholarly publishing, peer review and the internet.’ *First Monday*, 4(4) (1999), Available online: http://131.193.153.231/www/issues/issue4_4/proberts/index.html.

44 As evidenced by the Minutes of the Publications Committee (4 June 1936), WUA.

45 Minutes of the Publications Committee (9 December 1938), WUA.

46 Minutes of the Publications Committee (15 June 1960.), WUA.

47 Minutes of the Publications Committee (7 August 1959), WUA.

been complaints over the years of a lack of objectivity and the time taken to reach a decision.⁴⁸ WUP would proudly record that, between 1976 and 1986, they considered applications for 121 “major works.”⁴⁹ Of these, only 32 were accepted for publication. This indicates both their high standards of review and their high rejection rates.

The UNP standards for peer review also focused on academic merit, as well as considering commercial factors such as the probable market for a title and competing publications. The policy for peer review may be elicited from reader reports, as UNP, in contrast to Wits and Unisa, did not draw up a strict set of guidelines on peer review for a very long time, and relied to a large extent on the members of the Press Committee to serve as reviewers and to play a very active part in the selection process. An example of the various factors making up peer review at UNP illustrates the interplay of academic and commercial factors. Phyllis Warner’s manuscript *Ritual and Reality in Drama* was accepted for publication in the 1960s and even actually featured in the 1969 book list. However, it was later turned down and not produced, as the potential prescriptions at various universities did not materialise. In other words, in spite of its academic merit, the book could not be published as the market was deemed too small, and risky in the absence of firm orders from the universities.

The members of Unisa’s early Publications Committees soon recognised the potential pitfalls of an unregulated system of acceptance and rejection, and raised the matter of a formal peer review process, as may be seen in the following extract from the minutes of one of their meetings in 1967:

Discussion followed on the appointment of referees in general. Prof. van Rooy proposed that persons outside the University be approached in every instance. His view was that colleagues’ complete objectivity could be hampered at times. The Chairman [Prof. J.H. van der Merwe] and Prof. Blignaut then raised an objection to Prof. van Rooy’s proposal, pointing out that, in certain fields, the University’s staff possessed the only experts. Prof. van Rooy rephrased his proposal and put it to the Committee that, as a general rule, MSS be referred to referees outside the University where such persons were available – otherwise expert opinion should be sought from among the University’s staff.⁵⁰

48 N.H. Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,’ Memo submitted to Publications Committee (26/07/1983), WUA, p. 1.

49 S87/414, 1987: 156.

50 Minutes of the Publication Committee (27 October 1967), UPA, my translation.

The extract reveals concerns with objectivity, tempered by a certain arrogance – did the “University’s staff” *really* possess “the only experts” in any field? The peer review procedure was established at this time as choosing two referees for each manuscript, and paying an honorarium for their work (a key difference from procedures in journal review, which is almost always unremunerated, but which involves far shorter texts).⁵¹ This procedure remains the same to this day, but the innate differences in opinion were not yet resolved, as revealed by this 1970 report on the functions of the Publications Committee:

Each manuscript that is submitted for publication in the current series must be studied by each member of the Committee with a view to a motivated recommendation, otherwise selection becomes a farce. If one or more members – or even all the members – are not experts in the field of the manuscript, selection in any case becomes a farce. In such cases, the assistance of one or more experts is requested, but it is sometimes difficult, because this is all done on a voluntary basis. Sometimes experts outside of the University must even be approached. But even in the most ideal situation, namely that all of the members, or at least a good few, are experts in the discipline which the manuscript deals with, it is a heavy burden on the members to conscientiously go through the large number of manuscripts and make motivated recommendations.⁵²

Peer review would at times also be bypassed, in an informal manner. Prof. C.F.J. Muller recalls an instance: “I remember that when (F.) Van Jaarsveld submitted a historical contribution to the Publications Committee, (Theo) Van Wijk gave his critique not to the Committee, but very diplomatically, in private to Van Jaarsveld. The latter appreciated this, took the critique to heart, and declared to me that his colleague was a better historian than he was.”⁵³

It was only later that external reviewers would be used on a regular basis, and that Unisa Press would take on the responsibility for correspondence with the reviewers. Indeed, as recently as 1989, Unisa Press would turn down co-publishing proposals and manuscripts, because “we usually only publish books by our own academics,” and “(w)e must advise you that the University of South

51 F.A. van Jaarsveld, ‘Die werksaamhede van die Publikasiekomitee,’ *Unisa* (1961), p. 71.

52 M.J. Posthumus, *Ondersoek na uitvoering van die administratiewe funksies van die Publikasiekomitee in die besonder en na die Universiteit se uitgewerstaak in die algemeen* (Internal document, 1970), UPA, p. 1, my translation.

53 Muller, in B.J. Liebenberg (ed.), *Professor Theo van Wijk* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1988), p. 16; my translation.

Africa only publishes textbooks for its students as well as research manuscripts selected on grounds of a high academic standard.”⁵⁴ This situation soon changed to the more professional division between Unisa Press and the rest of the university, in that local academics were expected to compete, through the peer review process, in the same way as potential external authors.

The general shift from informal review to a more professional peer review system mirrors an international trend: “In sum, we have moved from a scenario in which publishers and producers were the same people, housed in the same... institution, who met once or twice a week and took turns at reviewing each other’s work, to a situation in which a sharp division of labor (and often an institutional division too) has been introduced between producers, editors, reviewers, and publishers.”⁵⁵

What Could not be Said: The Effects of Censorship

As a result of the publications control legislation, various international university presses experienced the banning or censorship of their books in South Africa, usually due to the author being subject to a banning order rather than because the content was considered overtly political or explosive. For instance, the University of Texas Press published a volume of poetry by Dennis Brutus, who had been banned, and the book in turn could not be circulated within South Africa. OUP had a chequered record, with potentially controversial works by Athol Fugard (1974) and W.B. Ngakane (with a translation of Prester John, 1964) being passed for publication, but authors such as Lewis Nkosi (1964) being banned. Rhodes University was also able to publish work by the liberal writer Alan Paton in 1951, and indeed, none of Paton’s works appear to have been banned – although his liberal critiques may at times have been uncomfortable, they were not considered dangerous.⁵⁶

The oppositional publishers, and particularly Ravan Press and David Philip, were more affected by censorship. Peter Randall of Ravan describes the effects – both financial and otherwise – of one of the Spro-Cas publications being banned:

54 Correspondence, P. van der Walt to Milly F. du Bois and Associates (28 November 1989), UPA; Correspondence, P. van der Walt (26 April 1989), UPA.

55 Biagioli, ‘From Book Censorship,’ p. 33.

56 Peter McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

So far, one Spro-cas publication has been banned outright by the Publications Control Board. This is *Cry Rage*, a collection of poems by two black writers. No reasons were given by the PCB [Publications Control Board], nor did it bother to inform the publishers, who learned of the banning from the press. Fortunately, the first printing had been almost sold out, but about two hundred copies had to be withdrawn. If it had not been banned, *Cry Rage* would undoubtedly have been reprinted and the authors would have received considerable royalties. The fact that 4,000 copies were sold in less than four months indicates that the book was set to become a South African best-seller. Now not only has South Africa been deprived of an authentic expression of black feelings, but the poets have been denied their rightful financial return.⁵⁷

On the whole, publishers tried to avoid such consequences – and particularly the financial loss – by submitting to the government's censorship regime or self-censoring. The OUP management, for instance, appears to have “welcomed the establishment of a censorship board because [Director Cannon] said it made life easier for a publisher than self-censorship.”⁵⁸ At the same time, “avoidance of public debate about South Africa became the official management strategy.”⁵⁹ And OUP continued with self-censorship into the 1970s and 1980, in that “[Director] Gracie systematically rejected all political or controversial titles, and sent proposals instead to London or the Clarendon Press.”⁶⁰ Davis gives examples of texts rejected on this basis.

WUP admitted that it, like OUP, complied with the legal requirement to submit certain titles for permission to publish. The Publications Committee discussed the legislation relating to banned books and banned authors at a meeting in 1971, and obtained a legal opinion on the “duties and responsibilities” of WUP in this regard⁶¹ – there was certainly no question of dissent raised at this point. This acceptance of the rules continued into the 1980s: “On three separate occasions WUP successfully applied for Ministerial, and on a fourth for the Publication Board's permission to publish for research purposes. Permission has never been withheld (sic).”⁶² The publisher saw herself as “a victim of a system of which it is

57 Peter Randall, ‘Spro-Cas: Some publishing problems,’ *Africa Today*, 21(2) (1974), p. 77.

58 James Currey, quoted in Caroline Davis, ‘Histories of publishing under apartheid: Oxford University Press in South Africa,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37(1) (2011), p. 89.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

61 Minutes of the Publications Committee (1971), WUA, S71/620: 4.

62 Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,’ p. 2.

also an opponent,” but WUP’s opposition was not explicit. Rather, their engagement with the Publications Control Board implies support for the system, unlike the independent oppositional publishers, who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the censorship apparatus in any way.

At Unisa, the question was not even raised. Unisa Press did not submit any texts for approval, perhaps because none of those selected for publication was considered controversial in any way. The University also tended to clamp down on more subversive work at an earlier stage, before it reached publication.

In 1984, a manuscript arrived at UNP that reveals the constraints on publishing in South Africa. David Rycroft and Bhekabantu Ngcobo’s translation of Zulu poems (*The Praises of Dingana: Izibongo zikaDingana*) which was submitted for the Killie Campbell Africana series, created potential problems, because Ngcobo was in exile and a banned person, and as such could not be published or even quoted. The Press Committee discussed the “troubling” matter, and made the decision to request an exemption to publish in spite of Ngcobo’s “disability,” as well as to request legal advice on the matter.⁶³ After consulting with the Attorney-General of Natal, it was found that special permission would likely not be needed, because of Ngcobo’s role as translator and transcriber, not as an author. As a result, prosecution was seen as an unlikely consequence of publishing. The decision was therefore made to proceed with publication: “It was established after discussion that the (Internal) Security Act did not apply in this case as Mr Ngcobo’s main contribution was as transcriber.”⁶⁴ This legal recommendation had its precedents: a similar case, of W.B. Ngakane’s translation of *Prester John* for OUP, had been referred to the Ministry of Justice but passed by the censors in 1964 – Ngakane was a banned person, but ‘only’ the translator of the work in question, and, as such, was deemed ‘acceptable.’

The fact that the UNP Press Committee felt the need to discuss the potential sanctions at some length, and even to obtain legal opinion on the matter, shows the extent to which publishers felt they had to comply with the censorship legislation. It also reveals a tacit acceptance of the rule of law, as none of the comments recorded supports the notion of publishing based solely on the merit of the work; all appeared to accept Ngcobo’s status as a banned person and to consider the consequences from a pragmatic point of view: Would the Press be sued? Would booksellers be able to stock the book? Would people be able to buy it? Moreover, no hint of criticism of the system was raised during these discussions – or at least, recorded in the minutes for posterity.

63 Minutes of meetings of the Killie Campbell Africana Library (KCAL) (4 July 1984), UNA.

64 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (29 August 1984), UNA C84/2/1.

A different form of censorship may be seen in the experiences of John Laband and his title *Fight us in the Open: The Anglo-Zulu War through Zulu Eyes*, published by the University of Natal Press in 1985. After Oscar Dhlomo, a historian but also the Minister of Education and Culture of KwaZulu and secretary-general of Inkatha, had read it, Laband was forced to excise evidence that Mnyamana, grandfather of Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had displayed poor generalship in the 1879 war.⁶⁵ Any such comment, it was felt, would reflect badly on the Zulu royals and the Zulu nation generally. As this incident shows, censorship may also be related to sensibilities on other sides of the political spectrum. It also reveals the extent of Inkatha's influence in KwaZulu-Natal.

While the titles banned by the apartheid government's censorship apparatus numbered in the thousands, no local university press titles were ever banned. Rather, these publishers seem to have chosen a path of self-censorship amidst the repressive measures applied to their academics. Thus, the impact of censorship can mostly be felt in the rise of self-censorship.

Privatism and Self-Censorship

A tactic that commonly arose as a response to censorship and restricted academic freedom, which cannot neatly be classified as either resistance or collusion, is that of self-censorship, a sub-category of 'privatism.' Merrett describes the multiple effects of censorship on scholarship:

In the 1960s and the early 1970s, academics frequently referred to censorship's effect upon scholarship. For instance, it was blamed for the exiling of South African researchers and research; and the impoverishment of local work and the suspicion with which it was viewed overseas. The effective cordoning off of areas of South African life to critical study by apartheid led to the phenomenon of privatism, the choice of safe, conservative work of a non-controversial nature. Some academics protected their work from suppression by cloaking it in language only understood by a few fellow practitioners. This trend amounted to severe self-censorship.⁶⁶

It has thus been argued that self-censorship at the university was an inevitable result of repression, and that academics turned to this as a survival technique. Self-censorship refers to the voluntary or deliberate act of avoiding trouble

65 De Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought*, p. 435.

66 Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 195.

with the law by researching or publishing only material that would not challenge the state. In other words, as André Brink argues, “the most important ally of the oppressor in the act of oppression can be the collaboration of the oppressed himself.”⁶⁷ As Merrett notes, this form of censorship “is rarely discussed, has never been properly analysed and in many ways defies empirical research” – it is, after all, difficult to describe a negative.⁶⁸ He goes on to suggest that, “[i]n the 1960s and 1970s the aura of the state security system was enough to deter writers and academics from publishing material that was thought to be challenging. The threat was both psychological and real.”⁶⁹ Yet, this phenomenon is almost invisible: “Whereas precensorship is often invisible to the public, postcensorship, aimed at the consumption of research products, is not: lectures may be boycotted or publications blacklisted, banned, pulped, or burned.”⁷⁰

Self-censorship may thus be used as a tactic to avoid conflict with the state, as well as to maintain relations with the community outside the university. It may be imposed by the publisher, as in the case of Leo Kuper’s chapter in the *Oxford History*, or it may be a strategy used by authors, to ensure that their work can continue to be published and circulated, and to avoid punitive measures. Both kinds of self-censorship may be found during the apartheid era. For example, Peter Randall of Spro-Cas and Ravan Press described how self-censorship could be imposed, giving examples from his own writing and publishing career:

Writers in South Africa have to be constantly on their guard not to offend against the galaxy of laws governing freedom of expression, with the severe penalties that may be incurred by the unwary. In addition, it is an offence to quote banned or listed people, including almost every major black political figure of the past twenty years outside the separate development system, and most of the significant black writers of this and the previous generation. For example, Andre Brink in *Anatomy of Apartheid* (Spro-cas Occasional Publication 1) wished to quote the African writer Ezekiel Mphahlele but this had to be deleted by the editor before going to press. Similarly, Nadine Gordimer was unable to quote the same writer, and others who were relevant for her scholarly purpose, in *The Black Interpreters: Notes on African Writing* (Spro-cas / Ravan, 1973). Similarly,

67 Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 144.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 217.

69 *Ibid.*

70 De Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought*, p. 19.

in the final Spro-cas report, *A Taste of Power*, I was unable to draw on the work of Dr. Rick Turner and other banned people. All the Spro-cas study commissions faced similar problems and were often frustrated by having to impose a self-censorship which inevitably affected the quality of their reports.⁷¹

In terms of scholarly publishing, Welsh provides an example of important research being carried out in South Africa, but not making it through the publication stage, most likely due to self-censorship:

Significantly, nearly all the universities stressed the need for research into the problems arising out of the racial issue. One of the projects funded was a study of the origins and incidence of miscegenation in South Africa during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A more controversial topic in the South African context can hardly be imagined! It appears, however, *never to have emerged as a published study*.⁷²

Moreover, Welsh describes the self-censorship of academics before publication, especially in cases where researchers required permits from the Department of Bantu Administration and Development to conduct research in 'Bantu' areas and knew they would have to submit drafts of their writings ahead of publication.⁷³ Savage refers to "self-restraints" rather than self-censorship, but notes that this avoidance of sensitive areas of research was widespread during the apartheid period.⁷⁴

Self-censorship could be seen as an almost inevitable consequence of the restrictive environment. Welsh and Savage note the "powerful segregationist norms in the white community outside" the university.⁷⁵ But self-censorship can also arise because of the norms within the institution itself. Bourdieu has described the "university field" as being engaged in a "circuit of continuous exchanges," and thus of manifesting "active inertia": "tremendous efforts are

71 Randall, 'Spro-Cas: Some publishing problems,' p. 76.

72 D. Welsh, 'The values of the English-medium universities,' in A. Lennox-Short and D. Welsh (eds), *UCT at 150: Reflections* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), p. 28; emphasis added.

73 Ibid., pp. 34–35.

74 Michael Savage, 'Constraints on research in sociology and social psychology,' in J. Rex (ed.), *Apartheid and Social Research* (Paris: Unesco, 1981), p. 48.

75 D. Welsh and M. Savage, 'The university in divided societies: The case of South Africa,' in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 139.

exerted by scholars in order to replicate their own methodologies, theories, and paradigms.”⁷⁶ The effect is to create an insider culture, and to dissuade academics from venturing outside of what is considered acceptable. This could easily lead to self-censorship on the part of academics, and certainly also on the part of university presses. Developing Bourdieu’s thesis, Martin Bernal argues that “[u]niversity presses, on the whole, serve to constrict, not enlarge the flow of intellectual alternatives available to the reading public.” He goes on:

Control of university presses, and major influence over the commercial ones, allows academics supporting the *status quo* to ‘maintain standards’ – as they would express it – or, in other words, to repress opposition to orthodoxy.⁷⁷

Allied with the tactic of self-censorship is what Adam, Merrett and others call ‘privatism,’ which refers to “safe, conservative research of a non-controversial nature.”⁷⁸ There are a number of references to these strategies in the literature on academics during the apartheid period. Marcum notes that, “in the absence of a societal tradition of respect for Anglo-American values of academic freedom,” in South Africa at the time, “[t]imidity, safe scholarship and mediocrity [were] inevitable tendencies in such a climate of overt political pressure.”⁷⁹ Others have spoken of a “a bias towards researching safe topics” and described how “academics have moved towards adopting an apolitical technocratic managerial role in serving the interests of the top levels of society.”⁸⁰ This leads to the avoidance of certain, more controversial or politically charged research themes:

...the heart of the problem of social research in South Africa [is] the elimination at an earlier stage of the very questions which might lead to answers embarrassing to those who seek to maintain White supremacy. The simplest way in which this is done is by not addressing questions of race relations at all but joining in academic and intellectual debates which are concerned with other matters.⁸¹

76 Quoted in Jacques Berlinerbrau, *Heresy in the University* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999), p. 117.

77 Ibid.

78 C. Merrett, *State Censorship and the Academic Process in South Africa*, Occasional Paper 192 (University of Illinois, 1991), p. 9.

79 John A. Marcum, *Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa* (California: University of California Press, 1981), p. 55.

80 Taylor, ‘The narrow ground,’ p. 41.

81 Rex, *Apartheid and Social Research*, p. 19.

The problem has been identified within a number of disciplines – and, indeed, in other countries, with Fidler, for instance, describing the avoidance of controversial work at universities in the USA and Horn revealing the practice in Canada.⁸² For instance, Garson identified this predicament among historians in South Africa, noting “the temptation simply to cease asking the questions that can only be answered by using the censored material. The effect would be to leave whole segments of South African history entirely to historians working and publishing abroad only.”⁸³ Davenport, in 1977, observed that historians were “divided ideologically between those who supported the government and wrote appropriately packaged history and those who did not, as well as between those who believed class interests to be the critical motor of history and those who argued otherwise.”⁸⁴ Thompson criticised historians and other academics for their resort to privatism:

The most fundamental problems in South African society are taboo subjects for open-minded, uninhibited scholarly research. To examine the titles of South African dissertations in history and the social sciences is to realise how careful the authors are to avoid issues such as miscegenation, law enforcement, and the role of the judiciary.⁸⁵

In turn, Taylor describes sociologists “play[ing] it safe; either through grappling with grand theory, dabbling with abstracted empiricism or juggling with future scenarios for a post-apartheid South Africa.”⁸⁶ Slabbert sums up the significance of the academic’s decision in this regard:

In South Africa especially there is a political difference in the decision of a sociologist to either teach on the growth of voluntary organisations in Scotland or the reason for a colour bar in industry in South Africa.⁸⁷

82 William P. Fidler, ‘Academic Freedom in the South Today,’ *AAUP Bulletin*, 51(5) (1965), pp. 413–421; Michiel Horn, *Academic Freedom in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

83 N.G. Garson, ‘Censorship and the historian,’ *South African Historical Journal*, 5 (1973), p. 6.

84 Quoted in Jane Carruthers, ‘The Changing Shape and Scope of Southern African Historical Studies,’ *South African Historical Journal*, 62(2) (2010), p. 385.

85 Leonard Thompson, ‘Some Problems of Southern African Universities,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds.), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 292.

86 Quoted in Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 196.

87 Quoted in Geoff Budlender, ‘The Conservative Bias of South African Universities,’ in H.W. van der Merwe and D. Welsh (eds.), *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977), p. 262.

Van Niekerk has examined self-censorship in the field of law, and specifically law publishing, noting that its effects on the articles published in journals far outweigh the direct consequences of censorship, such as direct threats to publishers in respect of printing contracts and subscriptions. He blames self-censorship for the existence of an “extensive no-go area for academic scrutiny around a vast area of the justice domain...[resulting in] a priori abdication of a role of academic dissidence.”⁸⁸

The significance of both self-censorship and privatism is that these may lead to more insular, mediocre research, which does not respond to the key issues of the day. More strongly, self-censorship is widely seen as cowardly and detrimental to good quality research. The Academic Freedom Committees of the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand argued in 1974 that self-censorship and privatism had “undermine[d] high standards of scholarship.”⁸⁹ As René de Villiers of the Progressive Party argued, “pre-natal censorship [is]... the high road to mediocrity and to deadly conformity.”⁹⁰

Were the university presses engaged in self-censorship of their titles? As difficult as this is to ascertain, this was certainly the perception at WUP. Nora Wilson noted in a report in the mid-1980s that a common complaint from authors was that “[t]he WUP is not prepared to take the chance on publication of a work which may be banned.”⁹¹ Her response, in contrast, was that:

This statement has no foundation. To my knowledge, no works of this type have been submitted, and quite unequivocally academic merit, not the ‘authorities’ possible reaction to a work has remained the criterion for acceptance. *‘Self-censorship’ has never been part of WUP policy.* Indeed, it was a suspicion that self-censorship would be required that led the Committee and Editorial Boards to decline total subvention of our two journals which had been selected for ‘national research journal’ status by the Bureau for Scientific Publications in 1978.⁹²

In the surviving records for WUP, there is no documentation to provide evidence of self-censorship. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a morbid fear of getting on the wrong side of the censors. A colleague recalls that Wilson kept a list of all the banned people in South Africa, which was carefully checked to

88 B. van Niekerk, *The Cloistered Virtue: Freedom of speech and administration of justice in the western world* (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 175.

89 Quoted in Merrett, *State Censorship and the Academic Process*, p. 9.

90 Quoted by Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 79.

91 Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,’ p. 1.

92 Ibid., pp. 1–2; emphasis added.

see that no authors featured on it.⁹³ In addition, there were some unusual decisions regarding selection and approval of certain manuscripts. For example, in the early 1990s Roger Southall's manuscript on labour received glowing reader reports, but was later rejected. *Solidarity or Imperialism? International Labour and South African Trade Unions* was then published in 1995 by the newly formed University of Cape Town Press. Paul Rich's work on liberalism, *Hope and Despair*, was similarly rejected, but went on to be published in 1993 by British Academic Press in the UK and IB Tauris in the USA. A work of historiography, *History from South Africa*, was published only in an international edition in 1991 by Radical History Review, after being rejected by the WUP Board. As there was little need for self-censorship during this period, and censorship generally was much less harsh, we can only speculate as to the reasons for the rejection of these apparently worthy publications. No reasons are given in the records.

Yet the perception or incidence of self-censorship is certainly not surprising, given the milieu. The university presses were in a still more precarious situation than other forms of publisher, given their funding: the state subsidisation of research conducted at the universities, and of the publishing of that research: "...because of the pre-disciplining' of academicians, the simple requirement that manuscripts had to be reviewed by the whole academy or by a committee made it almost impossible that anything controversial would go to press. The institutional contexts in which the texts were produced and the authors' direct dependence on the sovereign for their employment further reduced the probability that the work would be seditious in any way."⁹⁴ Being reliant on funding from donors insulated the oppositional publishers to a greater extent from potential political interference or the threat of the withdrawal of funding.

In all my sifting of the archival documentation, only a couple of instances could be found of the *potential* suppression of a title or an author at the university presses in South Africa. Of course, it is possible that further instances were not recorded, as the archival record is incomplete. It is also difficult to elicit what is *not* said in the surviving documents. A 1950 review of Hilda Kuper's "depressing" study of interracial relationships in Swaziland, *The Uniform of Colour* (WUP, 1947), for example, noted that, "[d]espite the gruesome quality of the tale, the author has obviously pulled her punches in what must have been the vain hope of avoiding offense in South Africa."⁹⁵ This indicates some self-censorship by the author, pre-publication.

93 Interview with Ms G. (2014).

94 Biagioli, 'From Book Censorship,' p. 15.

95 Walter Goldschmidt, 'Review: *The Uniform of Colour* by Hilda Kuper,' *American Anthropologist*, 52 (1) (1950), p. 101.

There is also mention in the 1970s, for example, of the review reports for Unisa Press of a manuscript on *Russia and the South African War, 1899–1904* by Elisaveta Foxcroft. After mention that the Publications Committee was unsure of its “marketability,” although they were convinced of its academic merit, it fades from the records.⁹⁶ Confusingly, the manuscript appears from the record to have been accepted: “the author points out that, given the international situation after the Angola crisis, this is now the psychological moment to publish the work.”⁹⁷ Perhaps the international situation was considered too fiery for Unisa Press? In any case, the book was not published by the university, but went on to be published by the religious publisher, CUM Books, in 1981. This was not a case of self-censorship on political grounds, but it remains an interesting example.

Another example from Unisa Press is a manuscript that was submitted on the *Politieke Posisie van die Kleurling* (‘Political Position of the Coloured Person’). No author is mentioned in the records. It was reviewed by only a single referee – unusual in terms of Unisa Press’s peer review policy – and it is clear that it was considered too politically risky for the university to put its seal on it, as it was summarily rejected. Interestingly, OUP also rejected Pierre Hugo’s similar work on *Working within the System: A Study of Contemporary Coloured Politics in South Africa* in the 1970s.⁹⁸ The text was finally published as *Quislings or Realists? A Documentary Study of ‘Coloured’ politics in South Africa* – by Ravan Press, in 1978 – and was well received. This area of race-related politics was clearly a controversial field in which to publish at the time.

A third example at Unisa relates to self-censorship by the institution, prior to publication. In the late 1970s, historian Albert Grundlingh produced a study of treason and Boer collaboration during the second Anglo-Boer War, which he titled *Die Hendsoppers en Joiners: Die Rasionaal en Verskynsel van Verraad* (later published in English as *The Dynamics of Treason: Boer Collaboration in the South African War of 1899–1902*). The book emerged from his MA studies at Unisa, but he encountered opposition to the topic, as many Unisa academics felt that it reflected badly on Afrikaner history – and thus on the institution as well. The role of research should not be to denigrate one’s own people, it was argued. Unisa Press having rejected the book, it came out through HAUM in 1979, and in a second Afrikaans edition (1999) and then an English translation

96 Unisa Department of Publications, Dagboeke vir die Dagbestuur (21 August 1974), UPA; Unisa Department of Publications, Dagboeke vir die Dagbestuur (30 October 1974), UPA.

97 Unisa Department of Publications, Dagboeke vir die Dagbestuur (8 April 1976), UPA, my translation.

98 Davis, ‘Histories of publishing under apartheid,’ p. 95.

(2006) through Protea. The work is now considered pioneering in its field, but its non-conformist stance was unacceptable at Unisa during that period. The same went for Grundlingh's PhD research, which was published as *Fighting their own War: South African Blacks and the First World War* by Ravan Press in 1987. This example shows the limits of "repressive tolerance" at Unisa Press.

At UNP, the record does not show that any controversial or politically oriented publications were rejected, but it is again difficult to tell. In the minutes of the Press Committee, only a one-line explanation is provided for any manuscripts rejected: "It was decided not to publish this manuscript" – without any justification or discussion being added. For instance, this single line may be found next to the manuscript for Jeff Opland's *Xhosa Poets and Poetry* in 1985.⁹⁹ This acclaimed book would only be published much later, in 1998, by David Philip Publishers. Other examples may also be highlighted. For instance, the Minutes drily note that "Professor Duminy's offer of a collection of political pamphlets met with little enthusiasm among committee members"¹⁰⁰ – once again showing the reluctance to publish on current politics.

A more difficult case to assess at UNP is that of Maurice Webb's semi-autobiographical *The Colour of Your Skin: 35 Years of South African Race Relations*. The manuscript was found among his papers in the early 1980s, and was submitted and then accepted for publication after peer review. But the book was never actually published, and the reasons are difficult to ascertain from the records available. Was this a case of self-censorship? It is difficult to be completely sure.

Thus, in the absence of a more complete record and in the absence of corroborative evidence from other sources, it is difficult to say with any certainty whether the university presses actually practised self-censorship – but the signs are certainly there, to indicate that this was practised. Such self-censorship is an extreme form of privatism, and thus cannot easily be reflected on the continuum itself, but the bias towards 'safer' topics and a more cautious or conservative approach is certainly reflected in the placement of the university presses on the continuum.

Conclusion

This author profile reveals that the university presses were not the first port of call for most local academics. This may be seen in the following examples:

99 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (31 October 1985), UNA.

100 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (18 August 1982), UNA.

Henry Lever prepared an authoritative literature review of sociological works in the early 1980s, which included just two works published by local university presses (one his own work, published by WUP in 1968, and the other by Colin Tatz, published by UNP in 1962).¹⁰¹ So, too, Jane Carruthers, in a literature review of key historical texts, listed a number of significant historical studies from the 1970s and 1980s, all of which were published by Ravan Press, bar one – and the exception was published by Cambridge University Press.¹⁰² In addition, it is telling that, in Christopher Merrett's list of 'Organisations that documented, analysed and published information about the South African State of Emergency, 1986–1990,' none of the university presses as such is listed.¹⁰³ He does, however, list seven "commercial" publishers: David Philip, Indicator South Africa, Jonathan Ball, Madiba, Ravan, Southern, and Taurus. He also lists a few research institutes associated with the universities – the Centre for Adult Education (CAE, linked to Natal), Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS, linked to Wits), and the Indicator Project – some of which published a proportion of their work through the university presses, in an example of service to the university. Thus, the most important oppositional work – even when scholarly in tone and audience – of the apartheid era was not published by the university presses.

In addition to avoiding more radical work, it seems that some publications may also have been toned down prior to publication. Thus, while little – indeed, no – evidence could be found of overt or direct censorship of titles published by any of the South African university presses, it seems clear that a degree of self-censorship was practised, coupled in some cases with the practice of peer review. As a result, the more activist or militant authors rather tended towards either publishing abroad or with the independent publishers, such as Ravan Press or David Philip – presses that did not depend on government funding and approval for their very existence. In other words, the review and selection processes may have extended to the extent of self-censorship of politically uncomfortable topics.

The result of this combination of factors was that oppositional academic publishing became the domain of a few independent presses in South Africa until the last years of the apartheid regime. While the university presses attempted to offer a diversity of opinions and viewpoints, they were not,

101 Henry Lever, 'Sociology of South Africa: Supplementary Comments,' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 7 (1981), pp. 249–262.

102 Carruthers, 'The Changing Shape and Scope.'

103 C. Merrett, 'A Tale of Two Paradoxes: Media Censorship in South Africa, Pre-Liberation and Post-Apartheid,' *Critical Arts*, 15(1/2) (2001), pp. 50–68.

strictly speaking, oppositional in approach. Specifically, the university presses did not create a space for radical views or for the already marginalised voices of black and female academics. Instead, the university presses reflected their polarised society to a large extent. Gray is thus right to argue that the university pressed “failed to provide a voice for [their] radical academics.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Eve Gray, ‘Academic Publishing in South Africa,’ in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds.), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), pp. 176–177.

Readership and Distribution

Dubow has described the political correspondent of the newspaper *Hoofstad* as being alarmed to find radical publications being “devoured by young Bantus and white intellectuals” in a Cape Town bookshop.¹ Who reads scholarly books? The dissemination of knowledge is a key component of the mandate of a university press, as it seeks to complete the research cycle by making work as widely available and accessible as possible. The readership for university books is by definition a scholarly one, i.e. the producers and the readers are the same group, namely academics, although there is at times an overlap with the educated market for serious non-fiction. But the audience of a publisher also has an effect on its reputation, and on the image it develops – its brand or symbolic capital. Publishers thus aim to reach as wide an audience as possible when distributing their books, but also to reach the right audiences for their publications.

In South Africa, a perception which has prevented a number of academics from publishing with the local university presses, is that their reach is very limited. The following quote illustrates the common perception:

There are at present few incentives for local academics or editors to produce books that are locally oriented. Foreign publishers such as Routledge and Blackwell are well established brand names in academic circles, who are receptive to a broad range of academic subjects. The books that they produce are of a high quality and can be aimed at a wider, international reading market. Academics who do have books published by a university press, do not tend to gain much exposure or financial reward for their publications. Academics have for this reason turned to foreign publishers to have books published with international rather than local appeal.²

Professor C.W. Abbott, who was Chairman of the UNP Press Committee, similarly argued that “the main problem of the Press was that it did not have very strong sales organization. As a result of this many members of the university staff were under the impression that their work would receive wider distribution

1 Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, sensibility and white South Africa 1820–2000* (Oxford: OUP and Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006), p. 168.

2 Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS), ‘The South African Publishing Industry Report’ (Pretoria: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, 1998), p. 40.

if given to an outside publisher.”³ This affects both the author profile and the readership or distribution of university press books. The university presses always struggled to have their books accepted by local booksellers, who considered them “too specialised and too conservative.”⁴ This comment on their apparent conservatism is ironic, given that more oppositional publishers also struggled to get their books into mainstream booksellers. Thus, one of the reasons given by academics for not publishing with the South African university presses relates to their apparently weak reach in terms of distribution.

Reaching the Readers

The core readership for university press books was the local academic and university library market. It is not clear whether the growth in South African universities and their libraries after the 1950s increased the sales of local university press titles. The larger number of university libraries did lead to a regular sale of a certain number of copies of most titles, but sales appear to be linked more closely to the prescription for student sales of a textbook, or the cross-over appeal of a scholarly study – the wider social impact. What we find, in fact, is that while the average number of titles published by the university presses rose between 1960 and 1980, the number of copies sold per title dropped. But this audience was small and insufficient to sustain the publishing programmes of the university presses in itself. Thus, as they do nowadays, the university presses also aimed at a wider audience, but this was not an easy process.

Small publishers in South Africa, as elsewhere, have been unsuccessful because they could not “resolve the problems of promotion and distribution” and thus were unable to reach their “potentially considerable market.”⁵ Non-commercial work or books that were not clearly intended for a trade market have struggled to reach their readers:

...no bookshops cater for this trade; mail-order despatch implies too great an effort on the part of the reader; newspaper space for advertising is

3 University of Natal, Notes on Meetings of Academic Planning and Policy Committee (AP&PC), (Unpublished documents, 1972), UNA.

4 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (March 1984), UNA.

5 D. Philip, ‘Book Publishing Under and After Apartheid,’ in *Book Publishing in South Africa for the 1990s. Proceedings of a Symposium Held in the South African Library, Cape Town, 22–25 November 1989* (Cape Town: National Library of South Africa, 1991), p. 42.

crippling in cost; trading stores are not keen on stocking the literature; agents sell too little to merit the high organisational expenses involved.⁶

These are difficulties of small and non-commercial presses the world over, but they were further complicated by censorship and stratification in South Africa. In this country, a 'wider' audience necessarily included a variety of racial groups, beyond the small elite working at the universities. For example, WUP made a point of saying that it "produced work for black readers."⁷ Given the marginalisation of black academics, this black audience was by definition located outside the university. This is recognised in an article on UNP which argued that it "should be recognised as a significant and viable department of the University which serves both the University and the community."⁸ The presses clearly aimed at reaching into the community, more broadly defined than academia. However, little evidence could be found of a significant black readership for any of the university presses. Their scholarly work was primarily distributed through mainstream academic channels, and was overwhelmingly reviewed by white readers in academic journals, even internationally. Where their books were prescribed for black schools, then a black audience was indeed reached, but this was not the primary aim of publishing such texts. (Notably, Unisa aimed some of its titles at a schoolbook market, but primarily for the white schools.⁹)

In contrast, the oppositional publishers actively sought out a black readership, often through the use of unorthodox means of distribution. It should be noted that such methods were often ineffective in actually reaching their intended audience. For instance, direct sales was a tactic used from time to time, as well as other non-traditional sales channels. Ravan Press used unorthodox distribution methods to reach its multiracial readership – up to 90% black in some cases. In an interview in 1980, Mike Kirkwood of Ravan noted that, "[t]he whole black readership in this country operates largely outside the normal channels of bookshops. ... So we use non-commercial outlets, outlets that derive from the writers' groups that we publish. Before the first issue of the magazine [*Staffrider*] was published, we had lined up a whole army of

6 Stanley Ridge, 'The African Bookman: A progressive South African publisher before 1948,' in Cora Ovens (ed.), *From Papyrus to Print-Out: The Book in Africa (Bibliophilia Africana 8)* (Cape Town: National Library of South Africa, 2005), p. 100.

7 'Review of WUP' (Unpublished archival report, 1987), WUA S87/415, p. 2.

8 'University of Natal Press,' *NU Digest*, 2(4) (1981), p. 4.

9 Report on Publication Committee Affairs Prepared for Board of Tutors Meeting (1966), pp. 4–5, my translation.

distributors who knew what the magazine was doing and that their particular communities would be interested in it.”¹⁰ This form of direct engagement with the readership predates the kind of communities now being developed with the help of social media. Oliphant, however, cautions against seeing a black, “mass” audience as necessarily large: “For oppositional publishers concerned with reaching the oppressed, this market has since the penetration of literacy on this sub-continent, been relatively small.”¹¹

Apart from the local market, there was also a readership overseas. Kirkwood described Ravan’s international readership as important, but not substantial – “I wouldn’t think it’s more than 500 copies.”¹² In contrast, David Philip Publishers always saw their international market as being of great significance, with Marie Philip commenting that the publishing house “did not intend to limit [itself] to the small reading market of Southern Africa.”¹³ This is borne out by the attention paid by David Philip to developing co-publishing and licensing links with other publishers – notably James Currey and Rex Collings – and to attending the Frankfurt Book Fair. However, over time the international market dwindled, partly due to declining interest in South African issues once apartheid had come to an end.

Similarly, the university presses also aimed many of their titles at a wider, international audience – what Lewis Nkosi has described as a “cross-border” audience.¹⁴ Nkosi was referring to an audience that reads across “borders,” including geographical, racial and other, more esoteric, forms of border. This audience was not the primary target market, especially in terms of immediate relevance, but given the nature of exile and anti-apartheid politics, they did constitute an important part of the readership. In 1922, when WUP published the first title under its imprint, it already used Longmans, Green & Co in the UK as distribution agents because of an awareness of the importance of international dissemination of research. Correspondence regarding overseas distribution can be found throughout the archives of the university presses. For

10 Mike Kirkwood, ‘*Staffrider*: An informal discussion,’ *English in Africa*, 7(2) (1980), pp. 25–26.

11 A.W. Oliphant, ‘South African Publishers, Social Transformation and the Democratisation of Communication,’ *Communicatio*, 17(1) (1991), p. 69.

12 Kirkwood, ‘*Staffrider*,’ p. 26.

13 Quoted in Isabel Essery, ‘The impact of politics on indigenous independent publishers from 1970 to 2004 illustrated by a case study of David Philip Publishers’ (MA thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2005), p. 20.

14 Lewis Nkosi, ‘Constructing the ‘Cross-Border’ Reader.’ In Elleke Boehmer, Laura Chrisman and Kenneth Parker (eds). *Altered State? Writing and South Africa*. Sydney: Dangaroo (1994), pp. 37–50.

instance, there is ongoing correspondence between WUP and Oxford, concerning possible distribution in the UK, as well as with a range of other book-sellers and distributors, including Simpkin Marshall in the UK, and Griggs Bookshop, CNA and Constantia Booksellers (appointed sole agents in 1946) for local sales.

The Wits point of view is put across strongly in a letter written to OUP in 1941: "We feel that publishing in this country, while it is satisfactory as far as the Union is concerned, will not give adequate publicity to what we consider to be useful material."¹⁵ During the war, however, OUP felt unable to assist WUP in this task. Indeed, even after the war, negotiations floundered and an agreement with OUP could not be reached. The impact of the war had both a local and international dimension: on the one hand, publication of several books had to be deferred due to a shortage of paper, and on the other hand, distribution in the UK was severely disrupted. Simpkin Marshall would distribute WUP's books from 1937 until 1940, when the firm was damaged during the Second World War and had to be liquidated. The losses were borne by the Press, which had fortunately taken out insurance against war damage for books being sent to the UK. For a period after the war, Kegan Paul became WUP's UK agent, especially in the field of African studies. As late as 1963, negotiations continued, to no avail, despite members of the Publications Committee visiting the UK and paying visits to various potential agents.

Distribution in the USA was not as successful as in the UK, but efforts were also made in the direction of the largest English-language market for books. In 1948, Percy Freer of WUP actually declined representation in New York, writing to the firm of L. Hoffman in Brooklyn, "We have so few publications of interest to the American people."¹⁶ This sentiment would change with time. In the mid-1950s, Dr C Kenneth Snyder, the US Cultural Affairs Officer, gave WUP advice on the matter, and as a result the Press approached several US university presses to act as agents for WUP books. There was no success from these approaches, but in 1957 WUP participated in its first overseas exhibition, sending books to the Second International Book Exhibition in Chicago. For a time, the Humanities Press Inc. was the agent for a number of books. Approaches were also made to Australian agents, but without resolution. Agency agreements also did not always work out, and with the ongoing lack of success in finding reliable agents overseas, the Press elected to sell all books directly, to all parts of the world, as of 1969. In spite of all these efforts, however, in the early 1980s WUP authors were regularly complaining that "WUP does not sell enough

15 Correspondence, H.R. Raikes to OUP (1941), WUA.

16 Correspondence, P. Freer, to L. Hoffman (1948), WUA.

books,” and it was admitted that “recent attempts at negotiating agency agreements have not been particularly successful.”¹⁷

Similarly, the University of Natal Press also made a concerted effort to find good distributors and to work on publicity for the books it produced, on the premise that “ways to increase sales further must be sought, particularly in regard to the British and European market.”¹⁸ From as early as Percy Patrick’s involvement in 1969, he argued that it was “absolutely essential that a highly efficient central distribution office should be equipped to handle *all publications*.”¹⁹ His successor, R.A. Brown, quoted the *Times Literary Supplement* in a report for UNP, saying, “[i]f the older university presses still dominate academic publishing, their strength is likely to be less in the discrimination of their editorial judgement or their typographical skill (though both are important) than in the efficiency of their distributive machinery and the drive of their sales organisation.”²⁰

At UNP, as at WUP, a variety of arrangements were attempted and then changed if they did not work out. For instance, an agreement was established with Southmoor Books in the UK during the 1980s, when an earlier agreement produced little revenue. The distributor in the UK later changed to Leishman and Taussig, as well as the Africa Book Centre. Similarly, an agreement with Lawrence Verry for distribution in the US, from the 1960s until the early 1970s, was replaced by an agreement with International Specialized Book Services, or ISBS, from 1985. The use of a US distributor was also affected by the anti-apartheid lobby. For a period in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a successful collaboration with David Philip Publishers saw the latter publicising UNP books within South Africa; an earlier agreement with Struik did not work as well.

As for Unisa, distribution appears to have been a larger and ongoing problem. Little attention was paid to the issue of circulation when the Publications Committee was formed and books started to be produced. All tasks were performed in-house, often by non-specialists. As a result, internal warehousing became an increasing burden, as the following description shows:

It seems certain that the increased number of titles published each year will continue to increase as the University expands. This is highly desirable,

17 N.H. Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,’ Memo submitted to Publications Committee (26/07/1983), WUA, pp. 2, 3.

18 ‘University of Natal Press,’ p. 3.

19 P.E. Patrick, ‘University Publications’ (Unpublished report, 19 May 1969), UNA, p. 2, emphasis in the original.

20 R.A. Brown, ‘University of Natal Press: Memorandum on present situation and future developments’ (Unpublished memorandum, 25 June 1970), UNA, p. 2.

of course, but it has, as a corollary, the intensification of certain problems. These are chiefly: the administration of the Publication Committee, the financing of publications, and directly allied to this, the need to expand, by means of more adequate advertising, the distribution and sales of the University's Communications. These have always been serious problems, but they have now become acute.²¹

A report to the Publications Committee in 1970 on the administrative functions accompanying the publishing function (*uitgewerstaak*) of the University, criticises their ability to distribute Unisa publications: "At the moment, part of the print run of the series publications are distributed to subscribers and sent out as exchange copies. The rest lie on the shelves – and will just keep lying there."²² At the same time, it notes, "We cannot expect more of the Publication Committee than some limited advertising aimed at preventing the build-up of stock on the shelves."

A committed distribution partner, however, remained an elusive part of Unisa's publishing programme for a long time, and orders and fulfilment became an integral part of the Unisa Press staffing and structure as a result. Even though the internal administration of orders and subscriptions was inefficient, the University imposed this constraint by preventing the Press from operating in a more professional manner. International distribution agreements were only finally signed after the end of the millennium, to improve circulation in Europe and the USA.

In terms of their international readership, moreover, the university presses were affected by the international political context, and specifically international activism against the apartheid government and the academic boycott. Censorship was a key factor in the international academic boycott of South Africa, as universities and other bodies strove to underline their "total opposition to the policies of apartheid and of censorship of academic work, books, literature, etc. [believing] that the most effective action is the maintenance of a total boycott on any form of contact with South African universities."²³

21 B. Goedhals, 'Communications of the University of South Africa,' *Unisa* (1970), p. 1.

22 M.J. Posthumus, *Ondersoek na uitvoering van die administratiewe funksies van die Publikasiekomitee in die besonder en na die Universiteit se uitgewerstaak in die algemeen* (Internal document, 1970), UPA, my translation.

23 C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip and University of Natal Press, 1994), p. 198; see also L.J. Haricombe and F.W. Lancaster, *Out in the Cold: Academic boycotts and the isolation of South Africa* (Arlington, VA: Information Resources Press, 1995).

Haricombe describes some of the effects of the academic boycott as “refusal by some international journals to accept publications emanating from South African authors; denial of participation of South Africans at international conferences; refusal by the international academic community to collaborate with South Africans or to visit South Africa; and the refusal by certain publishers and booksellers to provide information resources.”²⁴ At the university presses, it is difficult to find evidence of such a clear-cut impact of the academic boycott. In one example, Mobbs Moberly of UNP reported in 1975 that the *Conch Review of Books* would not accept advertisements for UNP books from “apartheid South Africa,”²⁵ while WUP experienced a similar problem in the mid-1980s. The reaction, it appears, was largely one of frustration.

However, the academic boycott does not appear to have adversely affected the local university presses to a great extent in terms of sales. Rather, there was an interest in and appetite for books on South Africa, and the international market continued to purchase books – give or take a few hiccups with distributors – throughout the apartheid period. (Local sales may also have been boosted by the lack of availability of suitable international materials due to the academic boycott, but it was not possible to verify this.) Thus, resistance activism created a ‘ready-made’ audience for many oppositional titles, in an unusual instance of an ethical force outweighing market forces. In fact, there appears to be less interest in South African scholarly and trade books since the end of apartheid, and the end of the anti-apartheid lobby. This large, international and highly engaged audience has all but disappeared with the end of apartheid, leaving publishers with the unenviable task of seeking out new readerships with an interest in South Africa and its knowledge production.

Promotion and Marketing

Closely linked to policies and problems of distribution, is the issue of marketing and the creation of awareness among the target readership. Marketing efforts appear not to have featured strongly on the agendas of the university presses – or not as strongly as they would for commercial publishers not receiving a subvention. Nonetheless, a brief analysis of the advertising and reviews of university press books provides another angle on the publishing philosophy

24 L.J. Haricombe, ‘Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies to Study the Effects of an Academic Boycott on Academics in South Africa,’ *The Library Quarterly*, 63(4) (1993), p. 512.

25 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (21 October 1975), UNA.

of the presses, and on their wider reception and impact. It also reveals how they saw themselves and what image they wanted to portray. WUP will be used as an example here, but the same trends may be seen at all of the presses.

It took a while, for instance, for Wits University Press to professionalise to the extent of actively marketing the books produced. In 1948 (a full 26 years after their establishment), WUP produced their first list of books published, a precursor to later catalogues. They also began to advertise sporadically in journals from around 1947. Their first international exhibition was in Chicago in 1957, and from 1964 WUP began to exhibit at the Frankfurt Book Fair and at other exhibitions in Europe and as far afield as Hong Kong. A representative of WUP first attended the London Book Fair in April 1983, but was disappointed in its scope and suggested concentrating on Frankfurt instead.²⁶

In the 1960s, marketing efforts remained somewhat haphazard, although regular advertisements may be found in WUP's own journals and at times in other local or international journals as well. These are all very simple, text-based advertisements. From the mid-1970s, a consolidated annual list would be produced by Nora Wilson, summarising the marketing efforts of the WUP for each year. This was at the same time as WUP's subsidy was under threat, and the Press was struggling for survival. The marketing lists reveal a wide array of attempts to improve the reach and sales of WUP books: advertisements (both paid advertising and reciprocal advertising in university-affiliated journals), directory listings, advertising on campus, and leaflets and brochures. The lists also provide some insight into the policies behind marketing certain kinds of books. For instance, they show that a great deal more resources and effort were put into marketing the popular, cross-over title *Frogs of South Africa* than the average WUP title, with a launch event, television and radio interviews, and the printing of 6 000 brochures for booksellers and others. Current reviews on Amazon indicate the lasting importance of this work: "Since its first appearance in 1979, this study has been widely regarded as the standard work on the frogs of the region."²⁷ But the lists also reveal that the marketing efforts were uncoordinated, probably because there were no dedicated sales or marketing staff.

An examination of WUP's marketing materials, and specifically its internally generated advertisements, also reveals changes over time in design and orientation. In the 1960s, these were largely sober, text-based adverts, with a minimum of information provided – perhaps an extract from a review at best, in addition to a single-sentence description. Figure 10 shows a typical example from 1963, which

26 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (1 August 1983), WUA.

27 Amazon.com, Review of 'Frogs of South Africa' (2012), Available online: <http://www.amazon.com>.

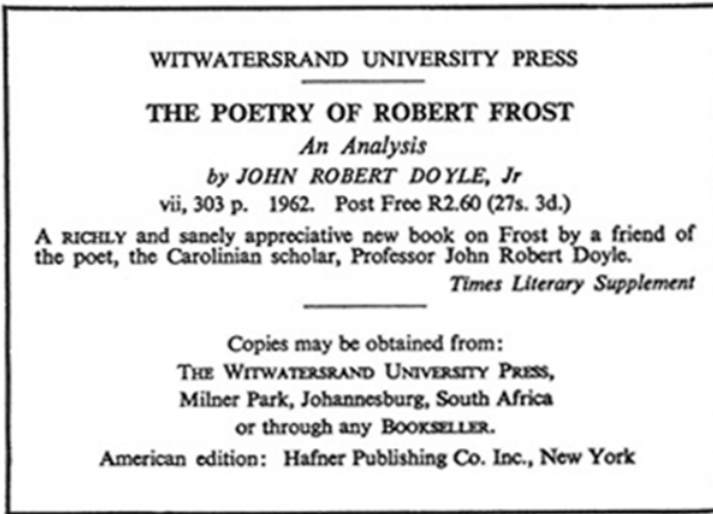


FIGURE 10 WUP advertisement, 1963

SOURCE: ADVERTISEMENT IN *ENGLISH STUDIES IN AFRICA*, 6(1)
(1963), P. 118

quotes the *Times Literary Supplement* and reveals a co-publishing arrangement for a US edition. Yet, as the figure shows, there was little consideration of readership or audience needs, and there is no attempt to comment on current affairs.

This approach changed, during the 1970s and 1980s, to a more graphic, attractive layout, although images were not yet included. Longer abstracts were included, and extracts from academic reviews were more regularly used to entice readers. Figure 11 shows a typical example, dating to 1985. Around the same time, the crest of the university was used alongside the colophon for the Press – as may be seen in the advertisement in Figure 11 – and the paratexts of the books published reveal a greater interest in design for a wider, more popular audience. The content analysis of the publishing list reveals a similar opening up in the publishing lists, with an increasing outward focus and a growing oppositional outlook. The example given in Figure 11 overtly relates the theme of the historical book advertised to “present-day South African society,” revealing WUP’s growing engagement with current affairs. The racial division of society is also clearly mirrored in the use of racial classifications and terminology.

WUP’s marketing lists of the 1980s also reveal the impact of politics, and in particular the academic boycott, on the distribution and marketing efforts of South African publishers: in the early 1980s, a note is added that certain international journals, such as *Africa* and the *Journal of African Languages and*

Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy

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FIGURE 11 WUP advertisement, 1985
SOURCE: ADVERTISEMENT IN *ENGLISH
STUDIES IN AFRICA*, 28(2) (1985), p. 80

Linguistics, had refused to publish advertisements for WUP books "on political grounds" or due to political sensitivities.²⁸ In the late 1980s, McGraw-Hill refused permission to use a quotation from one of their books in a WUP book, giving the reason that they had severed all commercial links with South Africa.²⁹ The International Association of Scholarly Publishers also refused WUP's application for membership, in 1984. This international engagement contributed to the growing political awareness at the university presses themselves, and may even

28 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (1986), WUA S86/307, p. 3.

29 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (1988), WUA S88/316, p. 8.

have assisted in making their publishing programmes more committed and oppositional.

The first indication that the impact of international academic boycotts was on the university press agenda comes in a 1982 letter from Bookweek Africa (an exhibition of books from a variety of African countries), which was discussed at the next WUP Publications Committee meeting.³⁰ The item, “International boycotts,” featured regularly in the minutes after that date. The original letter reads as follows:

There has been a decision by “Bookweek Africa” not to include South African-published material, with the exception of a number of books from radical, anti-apartheid publishers who actively encourage black expression in South Africa. ...We realize that this of course amounts to censorship, but the fact is – and it is a fact not always fully appreciated by South African publishers – that the whole matter is an extremely sensitive issue, and most black African publishers would strongly object to having their books displayed alongside those from South Africa, although I am not suggesting of course that the WUP is a publisher of apartheid propaganda.³¹

Clearly, judging by this letter from Hans Zell (the organiser of Bookweek Africa and a well-known scholar of African publishing), WUP was *not* perceived as one of the oppositional publishers or “radical, anti-apartheid publishers” at this time. It was still perceived in the category of ‘liberal retreat’ and the negotiated, rather than the oppositional, code, to use the terms of the continuum.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, with increasing political commitment on its part – as reflected in the increasingly oppositional publications it produced during this time – WUP’s own publicity material began to proclaim it be an “exciting and challenging [publisher] for a new South Africa.” Its advertising design also changed dramatically, to include images of book covers, and new fonts and designs – this may be seen in Figure 12, an example from 1991. This shift in design also reveals the increasing use of desktop publishing (DTP) in the wider publishing world, as it became easier to include images and use different fonts in even internally generated marketing material.

At UNP, a similar level of advertising and marketing to that shown at WUP was undertaken, and sampled advertisements show very similar characteristics to those of WUP – they have thus not been included for reasons of economy

30 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (17 March 1983), WUA S83/380.

31 Correspondence, Hans Zell to J.L. Sandrock, Publications Assistant (14 June 1982), WUA.

DRAMA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE

Martin Orkin



Orkin explores the works of white and black playwrights and, in examining 'alternative' theatre, clarifies what this is 'alternative' to. (*Southern African rights. Co-publication with Manchester University Press*).

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(*Southern African rights*)

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Dorian Haarhoff



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WITWATERSRAND
UNIVERSITY
PRESS
WUP

FIGURE 12 WUP advertisement, 1991

SOURCE: ADVERTISEMENT IN *ENGLISH STUDIES IN AFRICA*, 34(1) (1991)

and to avoid repetition. Representatives from UNP visited international book fairs from the 1960s. An interesting publicity innovation was the use of brochures aimed specifically at faculty members of the university, who were encouraged to purchase UNP books at a discount of 20% as Christmas presents. A marketing drive in 1982 saw 35 000 copies of a four-page leaflet being distributed by UNP, an astounding number for the time, while in 1979 a leaflet depicting books on Natal and Zululand was produced to coincide with the centenary of the Anglo-Zulu War.

As may be seen from the examples depicted here, the university presses also used their own journals to publicise their new titles, wherever possible. For instance, WUP would draw attention to new publications of interest to the readership of *African Studies* or *English Studies in Africa*, while UNP would advertise in *Theoria*. Unisa had a wider selection of journal titles, and advertised its titles in these where appropriate. At times, the university presses would carry reciprocal advertisements for one another's titles, particularly between WUP and UNP. Interestingly, several issues of *African Studies* carried advertisements for publications from African universities, such as the Institute for African Studies of the University of Zambia,³² and the Publications Office of the University of Zimbabwe.³³ The journal also carried a book review for a title from an African university press, Editions Universitaires du Rwanda, namely Gilles-Marius Dion's *Devinettes du Rwanda: Ibisakuzo*, a collection of riddles published in 1971.³⁴

Marketing efforts came much later to Unisa Press, reflecting its service rather than commercial orientation. Marketing received very little attention at Unisa at first, until the advent of a professional manager in the 1980s. Advertisements for Unisa Press publications were regularly featured in the press's journals, a simple and low-cost means of bringing them to a scholarly audience, but these consisted largely of text-based lists of new publications. For instance, an advertisement in *Kleio* from 1970, titled 'Communications of the University of South Africa / Mededelings van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika' states bluntly: "The following publications are obtainable (postage free, cash with order) from the *Publication Committee of the University of South Africa*."³⁵ It then goes on to list new titles in Series A, B and C, with no attempt made to highlight selling points or to tempt the potential reader.

32 *African Studies*, 37(1) (1978), p. 156.

33 *African Studies*, 46(1) (1987), p. 144.

34 *African Studies*, 33(4) (1974), p. 267.

35 *Kleio* (1970), p. 45, italics in the original.

The first ‘publications list’ at Unisa was produced as late as the 1970s, and catalogues were only introduced in the 1980s under the management of Eugene van Heerden. There was little effort to engage the readership until this date. This may partly be explained by the determinedly non-profit business model of the press, which will be described in further detail in the next chapter. Even afterwards, however, Unisa Press’s marketing efforts noticeably lagged behind those of WUP and UNP, which was reflected in relatively low sales for the majority of titles. Marketing appears to have become a priority only in the 1990s, as the environment for university press books and the broader socio-political context changed.

Reception and Impact

An examination of the distribution methods and promotional efforts of the university presses tells us only a limited amount about their actual reach and reception. Book reviews in local and international journals will be discussed here as a proxy for, and reflection of, the circulation and reception of these works. One interesting result is the finding that particularly the books published by WUP and UNP appear to have been widely reviewed world-wide, and received with some respect throughout the apartheid period. This reflects a global pattern of circulation. UNP’s records of reviews are particularly easy to follow, given the common practice of providing details of, and even extracts from, book reviews at every Publications Committee meeting. A number of titles and their reviews will be highlighted here.

As early as 1942, Dr Kurt Colsen’s *Fractures and Fracture Treatment in Practice* (WUP, 1942) was being hailed in the *British Medical Journal* as “a South African product which should export well;”³⁶ a US edition of the textbook was produced by Gruno and Stratton in New York in 1945, showing that it did, indeed, export well. Moreover, as this was a work highly sought after by military surgeons, WUP had no difficulty in obtaining permission to print from the Controller of Paper, and in sourcing sufficient paper supplies despite wartime restrictions. The textbook was prescribed in South Africa for the next twenty years. Similarly, Clarence van Riet Lowe’s *Elementary Field Gunnery: Theory and Practice* was also permitted to be published during wartime (WUP, 1942), due to its topicality and immediate relevance.

Early reviews often mention the publisher explicitly, as well as remarking on paratextual elements such as cover design and binding. For instance, a 1955

36 BMJ, Review: ‘Treatment of fractures,’ *British Medical Journal* (7 August 1943), p. 169.

review in *The Mathematical Gazette* of J.P. Dalton's *Symbolic Operators* (WUP, 1954) analyses the subject in some depth, noting in conclusion: "The Witwatersrand University Press is to be congratulated on the production of this, its first monograph on a mathematical subject."³⁷ Similarly, a review of *Race and Reason* (WUP, 1945) notes that "[t]his book consists of a selection from the writings of the late Professor Hoernle, and its publication is a tribute from the Senate of the University to the memory of one of its most distinguished members."³⁸ The reputation of Reinhold Hoernlé was thus international.

Reviews of celebrated academics such as Clement Doke and Desmond Cole also acknowledge their contribution to the field internationally, usually without even remarking on their location or place of publication in far-off South Africa.³⁹ A review of Doke's work in *Bantu Studies* by G.P. Lestrade is emblematic of such reviews: "The whole work is particularly rich in examples, and is a mine of idiomatic material, upon which the author is to be heartily congratulated. The University of the Witwatersrand and the Inter-University Committee for African Studies, which jointly made the publication possible, deserve thanks in this connection."⁴⁰ Lestrade goes on to comment on the paratext, suggesting the suitability and quality of the choices made by the university press for its audience: "The book was made and printed by the Replika Process by Messrs Percy Lund, Humphries and Co., Ltd., and is well done, on good paper, with a strong and serviceable binding."

Percival Kirby was an equally important figure in his field, and his publication of *The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa* (1953) was also well received: "This book is concerned only with African instruments, their physical and musical characteristics, their social use and their geographic distribution...It is a book which all serious students of African instrumental music must possess."⁴¹ The terms 'African' and 'Native' are not problematised in either the text or the reviews, and are seen as geographic or ethnic markers rather than social constructs. A 1967 review of G.F. Hart's *The Systematics and Distribution of Permian Myospores* (WUP, 1965), states that "[t]here is no question but that this work will form a reference for the student of Permian palynology for some time

37 J.L.B. Cooper, 'Review: *Symbolic Operators* by J.P. Dalton,' *The Mathematical Gazette*, 39(239) (1955), p. 256.

38 H.S. Scott, 'Review: *Race and Reason* by R.F.A. Hoernlé,' *Africa*, 17(3) (1947), pp. 214–215.

39 See, for instance, Joseph H. Greenberg, 'Review of *Contributions to the History of Bantu Linguistics* by C.M. Doke and D.T. Cole,' *American Anthropologist*, 65 (5) (1963), p. 1194, who refers to their work as "widely influential" and as laying "indispensable groundwork" in the field.

40 G.P. Lestrade, 'Book Reviews,' *Bantu Studies*, 13(2) (1939), p. 160.

41 Quoted in *African Studies* (1966), p. 56.

to come."⁴² These works were clearly being received and evaluated on their merit as works of international standing, not simply as South African texts intended for a local audience.

In turn, a 1970 *BMJ* review of De Caire's *Neurophysiology* (WUP, 1970) states that

...the author has managed to present the facts of the subject in an integrated and lucid manner and at such a level that interest is maintained without over simplification. It is immediately obvious that he has a wide knowledge of his subject, and that he is quite remarkably adept at getting this across to the reader. He is not afraid of speculation, but never misleads the reader into supposing that speculations are facts. A dry sense of humour is particularly welcome in a textbook, the more so when it serves to point out the logical errors into which research workers fall when they tend to become myopic.⁴³

A *SAMJ* review of *The South African Textbook of Sports Medicine* (WUP, 1979) is equally complimentary: "To cover so vast a subject as sports medicine, it was necessary that the editors assemble a considerable number of contributors. This they have done wisely and well. The book is well illustrated and beautifully printed. It will be of use to sportsmen and sports administrators as well as physicians. It is a South African 'first,' and it is highly recommended."⁴⁴ Both the local nature and the universal usage of the book are thus stressed in this review.

As for UNP, the reports published in the Natal Regional Survey (additional report no. 3 and no. 4) under the direction of Prof. H.R. Burrows were very widely reviewed. For instance, two reports were reviewed by Edward Munger of the University of Chicago in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.⁴⁵ In 1959, two reports (nos. 12 and 13) published by Oxford University Press were reviewed in the journal *Economic Geography*. These are examples of a wide range of international reviews, for texts that focused on very specific South African issues. So too, the authoritative *History of Natal* by Edgar Brookes and Colin Webb, first published in 1965, was very widely

42 H.L. Cousminer, 'Review: *The Systematics and Distribution of Permian Myospores* by George F. Hart,' *Micropaleontology*, 13(1) (1967), p. 117.

43 'Background to neurophysiology,' *BMJ* (21 November 1970), p. 481.

44 *SAMJ*, 'Review: *Sports Medicine*,' *South African Medical Journal* (19 January 1980), p. 102.

45 Edwin C. Munger, 'Review of Natal Regional Survey reports no 3 and 4,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 292 (1954), pp. 200–201.

reviewed, both locally and internationally. The 1969 UNP catalogue quotes extracts from a number of reviews:

A scholarly, well-written history, tolerant in its assessment of even bitterly controversial issues and compassionate in judgments...a valuable contribution to South African historical literature. (*American Historical Review*)

In die geheel beskou het die twee skrywers...’n nuttige bydrae gelewer en ten opsigte van die Natalse geskiedenis’n voorbeeld gestel wat met vrug deur ander historici vir geskiedenisse van die Transvaal, Vrystaat en Kaapkolonie nagevolg kan word. ('On the whole, the two authors...have made a useful contribution and set an example in respect of Natal history which could be fruitfully followed by other historians for histories of the Transvaal, Free State and Cape Colony.') (*Historia*, 12(1))

Scrupulously impartial in their assessment of the conduct and achievements of the various races in Natal. (*Eastern Province Herald*, 16 March 1966)

We especially recommend this History of Natal to all history teachers in our African schools. (*Umafrika*, 26 February 1966)

An essential tool for the scholar and research worker...an elegant and scholarly work which should attract wide acclaim. (*The Star*, 18 February 1966)

Is sure to take its place among the standard histories. The well-documented text, the excellent critically annotated bibliography and the carefully selected photographs all help to make this an outstanding history book by two authors who know their subject and how to write it. (*Daily Dispatch*, 23 February 1966)⁴⁶

A different kind of title, the bestselling *T.S. Eliot and the Human Predicament* by Audrey Cahill (UNP, 1967), was particularly well received in the US: "Not just another Eliot study but a beautifully fresh 'first book' for those coming new to the poet, and a satisfying and unobtrusive synthesis for those who know him well."⁴⁷ This distinctly apolitical title was thus well received internationally, and not specifically seen as a 'local interest' title, focusing on South African affairs.

In contrast, Unisa Press books were not widely reviewed internationally, or at least little evidence of reviews could be located. One factor is certainly the

⁴⁶ Quoted in UNP catalogue (1969), UNA.

⁴⁷ *Choice* (November 1967) quoted in Ibid.

language of publication; only English-language texts were likely to receive a general readership overseas, and Unisa published in both English and Afrikaans. Some of H.J. de Vleeschauwer's works on philosophy, published in English, French or German, were reviewed in European journals, including *Philosophy* from the Royal Institute of Philosophy – but then perhaps given his origins in Europe, his name was already known in academic circles and he would have specifically targeted a European readership. We can point, for example, to André Devaux, referring to De Vleeschauwer's work as "vast" and "very useful."⁴⁸

Another major work produced by Unisa Press, *A Select Bibliography of South African History*, compiled by the well-known historians C.F.J. Muller, F.A. van Jaarsveld and Theo van Wijk (1966), was more widely reviewed than the average title from this publisher. The reviews are not necessarily positive. For instance, Shula Marks reviewed the book for the *Journal of African History*, calling it "reasonably competent" and criticising the paucity of historical research on black people – not a glowing review, by any means.⁴⁹ In contrast, the review in *African Affairs* mentions the "distinguished compilers" of this "useful guide for historical research workers."⁵⁰ The text was also reviewed in South African journals, usually quite positively. The differential reception of the text is probably due to the differing political views of the various reviewers – this is a text that could be considered supportive of the apartheid ideologies or at best mildly critical. Shula Marks, for instance, could be considered part of the 'oppositional code' (as she was in exile herself), while the authors and title fall more strongly into the 'dominant-hegemonic code.' The wider readership and impact of this title could also be ascribed to factors such as the international renown of the authors themselves, the topic of the book and its widespread potential usage, and the greater marketing efforts dedicated to this title than to the average Unisa Press title.

There were of course books that fell flat as well; that disappeared with barely a ripple in terms of reviews after publication. One such was Simon Davis's *The Decipherment of the Linear A and Linear B Scripts of Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece* (WUP, 1967). Murray sums up the rather sad story, which shows a discrepancy between local (popular) and international (scholarly) impact:

48 André Devaux, 'Review of Le problème du suicide dans la morale d'Arnold Geulincx,' *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 69(1) (1971), pp. 145–147.

49 Shula Marks, 'A Bibliography of South African History,' *Journal of African History*, 8 (1967), pp. 568–569.

50 L.B.F., 'Review of *A Select Bibliography of South African History*,' *African Affairs*, 72(286) (1973), p. 101.

In 1967, the WUP published his book, *Decipherment...*, in which he claimed to have deciphered Linear A. Acclaimed in the Johannesburg press for “achieving international fame for himself and new lustre for his university,” Davis’s researches proved to be the great sadness of his career. In the English-language classical world his book fell virtually silent from the press, with few of the major journals reviewing it.⁵¹

Another indicator of reach is the number of languages into which works are translated, through the sub-licensing of subsidiary rights. While none of the university presses has been active in selling rights until after 2000, all have sold translation rights from time to time, largely as a result of ad hoc requests. In 1957, WUP sold their first translation rights, upon being asked for the rights to translate Rex Martienssen’s *The Idea of Space in Greek Architecture with Special Reference to the Doric Temple and its Setting* into Spanish, for the South American market (first published in South Africa in 1956, the Spanish edition was published in 1958 by Editorial Nieva Visión of Buenos Aires). This title also saw a US edition, with territorial rights being sold. In turn, South African rights were also bought to titles published abroad, such as Joseph Wolpe’s *Psychotherapy by Reciprocal Inhibition* (1958), originally published by Stanford University Press.

There is thus a clear indication that books from the university presses achieved a wide, even world-wide, readership, and their reception was largely positive. They were seldom reviewed in direct relation to the political situation in South Africa, except in cases where advertisements and reviews were refused on such grounds. Rather, they appear to have been received as scholarly works, contributing to the international literature in a wide range of subject areas. Some differential treatment of the works can be discerned, and this may be ascribed to the reviewers having differing political views from the authors of the works concerned – i.e. they fall into different positions on the continuum of intellectual response.

Co-publishing and Collaboration

While the university presses may be competitors for a small author pool and small market, there has always been a certain camaraderie in their approach to each other. For instance, WUP and UNP regularly advertised each other’s publications, and later forged a reciprocal “display and order-taking arrangement.”⁵²

51 B. Murray, *Wits: The ‘open’ years* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), p. 251.

52 Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,’ p. 3.

This informal collaboration dated back to a meeting between the two press directors at the London Book Fair in 1983. A WUP flyer from the 1980s reminds prospective clients: "Don't forget that we take orders for books published by the University of Natal Press." Nora Wilson of WUP noted, however, that collaboration with other universities was limited: "UNISA does not hold stocks of 'outside' publications and UCT has a commercially administered on-campus bookshop. I should like to assess the outcome of the WUP/UNP arrangement before approaching Rhodes."⁵³

WUP published mostly in English, so a number of Afrikaans titles that would otherwise have appeared under its imprint were published in collaboration with other local publishers. For instance, in 1936, J.D.A. Krige's *Die Franse Familienname in Suid-Afrika (van voor 1800) Etimologies Verklaar* ('French Family Names in South Africa (from before 1800) Etymologically Defined') was published by Van Schaik "for the University of Witwatersrand." Similarly, when Van Schaik published Eugene Marais' *Gedigte* ('Poems') in 1955 on behalf of the University, the Press received 50% of proceeds from sales.

The university presses also engaged in a co-publishing strategy with foreign publishers, in an attempt to improve the reach of their publications. Thus, a rise in co-publishing agreements with a wide range of partners in the US, UK and Australia may be attributed to a deliberate co-publishing strategy at both WUP and UNP, especially from the 1990s. Books were co-published at this time with a variety of US university presses (e.g. Mercer, Ohio, Wisconsin) and other scholarly publishers, such as Westview Press, as well as university presses and other scholarly presses in the UK (Cambridge, Manchester), Australia and even Zimbabwe. This strategy may have been sparked by meetings between Mobbs Moberly, Nora Wilson and James Currey in the UK in 1987, although earlier examples may also be found. One of these illustrates the ad hoc nature of earlier co-publishing attempts: Arthur Keppel-Jones's huge history of *Rhodes and Rhodesia: The White Conquest of Zimbabwe 1884–1902* was co-published with Canada's McGill-Queen's University Press in 1983, largely due to the contacts of the author himself – having taught for a number of years at the University of Natal, he later moved to McGill-Queen's, and he was responsible for initiating the co-publication negotiations.

Co-publications with local publishers were also undertaken, especially with educational publishers such as Shuter and Shooter, and occasionally with the oppositional publishers, David Philip and Ravan Press. However, the latter efforts seem to have been less successful, in particular a UNP collaboration with Ravan Press in publishing Jeff Guy's study of John William Colenso in 1983 (titled *The Heretic*). Mobbs Moberly wrote bitterly to the Registrar, T. Cochran,

53 Ibid.

that Ravan Press were “most unsatisfactory to deal with, particularly in their refusal to acknowledge our part in the publication.”⁵⁴ In part, this difficulty in working together arises from the widely divergent publishing philosophies of the two publishers, and their very different modes of working. Thus, while Ravan Press was promoting Guy’s study for its political insights and impact, for UNP this was a scholarly text first and foremost, based on rigorous academic research. Reading between the lines of Moberly’s correspondence, we can speculate that Ravan saw UNP as an inadequate publishing partner and as potentially impacting on their (Ravan’s) image as an oppositional publisher. This did not prevent Ravan from finding UNP’s financial support for the publication quite useful. Co-publishing with another oppositional publisher, David Philip, was more successful, although it was usually limited to distribution deals – perhaps because of Philips’ understanding of and sympathy with the dynamics of scholarly publishing? One could speculate that David Philip’s position on the continuum was closer to the university presses than that of Ravan.

In terms of wider industry involvement, the university presses have on the whole remained somewhat aloof. WUP first considered joining the Publishers’ Association of South Africa (PASA) in 1960, but decided not to become a member as they felt the benefits were not clear. Both WUP and UNP joined the non-racial IPASA (Independent Publishers’ Association of South Africa) when it was formed at the end of the 1980s, and for a time they were seen as part of a community of progressive publishers. Today, however, the university presses are all members of PASA and are seen as an important part of the scholarly sub-sector of publishing in South Africa.

Conclusion

A widespread complaint against the local university presses is that their reach is limited. When this complaint is considered from the perspective of the publishers and their efforts at distribution, we see that it is not entirely fair: the university presses have certainly made an effort to distribute their books both locally and internationally. However, these efforts have not been particularly successful.

In order to consider the reception of the university press books, this chapter also examined the marketing efforts of the local university presses, as well as their impact as gauged through the use of book reviews in academic journals.

54 Correspondence of M. Moberly to T. Cochran (29 January 1985), UNA.

In general, the marketing initiatives of the university presses reveal how these publishers perceived themselves, and how they wanted others to perceive them. There is a shift in paratext over time from very sober, scholarly publishers closely associated with their parent institutions, to more 'progressive,' engaged publishers that have their own identity and philosophy. This professionalisation is a trend world-wide, as university presses seek to become more commercial and marketable. It is also significant to what extent local books reached the international scholarly community, and how well received they tended to be. This insertion into the international community of scholars was tempered by certain factors, including the growing isolation of South Africa in the 1980s due to the academic boycott, the perception that the university presses were not oppositional publishers, and the choice of English or Afrikaans as the language of publication.

The distribution of university press publications has thus always been problematic and limited, in spite of efforts to extend their reach. Unlike the independent oppositional publishers, the university presses made little attempt to use unorthodox or non-traditional distribution channels. Like the oppositional publishers, however, they struggled with the perennial problem of accessing mainstream marketing and distribution channels. But the question of markets for the current period appears to be much more problematic now than it was during the twentieth century. Indeed, some have suggested that the market for university press books has disappeared altogether: "While the essential mission of a university press is to publish works for and by academics, and to keep alive scholarly debate in the community, this has become increasingly problematic in the absence of real markets for university press books."⁵⁵ This leads to a related perception that university presses are in decline: "Scholarly publishing is in decline due to the drop in the levels of funding of universities, libraries and research institutes."⁵⁶ The publishing figures available do not bear this out. Scholarly publishing may not be a vigorous commercial success in South Africa, but it is certainly holding its own.

55 Eve Gray, 'Academic Publishing in South Africa,' in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds.), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 178.

56 Solani Ngobeni, 'Scholarly Publishing in South Africa,' in S. Ngobeni (ed.), *Scholarly Publishing in Africa: Opportunities and Impediments* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2010), p. 80.

Business Practices and the Economics of Publishing

A university press is a curious institution, dedicated to the dissemination of learning yet apart from the academic structure; a publishing firm that is in business, but not to make money; an arm of the university that is frequently misunderstood and occasionally attacked by faculty and administration.¹

With this well-known quote, Max Hall sums up the competing tensions and pressures that influence the business model of university presses. Like the independent oppositional publishers, a university press is mission-driven, rather than profit-driven. This echoes Bourdieu's sub-division of the field of cultural production into the field of restricted production (dominated by the pursuit of symbolic capital, or the recognition of the symbolic value of its product) and the field of large-scale production (dominated by the quest for economic profit).² University presses clearly operate within a field of restricted production and aim at the quest for symbolic capital. However, the mission in the case of the university presses is related to academic merit and prestige, rather than directly to political change as for the oppositional publishers. The university presses, in this way, share a close affiliation with their parent institutions, the universities.

The business models of the university presses have clearly been constrained by their locations within the universities, as well as the competing imperatives of academic merit and self-sustainability. The universities in South Africa were not autonomous business units, entirely responsible for their own budgets and revenue. Rather, they functioned within a state system, in which they were subject to parliamentary oversight and budgetary control. This limited the scope of what a university could do. Bourdieu has pointed out the link between funding and a publishing list, indicating that, for universities, "[t]he state, after all, has the power to orient intellectual production by means of subsidies, commissions, promotion, honorific posts, even decorations, all of which are for speaking or keeping silent, for compromise or abstention."³ Thus, "[g]overnment

1 Max Hall, *Harvard University Press: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), blurb.

2 P. Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods,' *Poetics*, 14(1/2) (1985), pp. 13–44.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

authorities make it clear to university officials that continued good relations, budgetary allocations, and research funds depend on the appropriate academic and political behaviour on the part of the faculty.”⁴ This suggests a structural reason for the intellectual responses of academics, and their leaning towards privatism and cautious activism, rather than radicalism.

The missions of the university presses may be closely related to the roles they are expected to play by their parent institutions. These expectations are revealed most clearly in times of stress, such as when the functions of the university presses are called into question. These reviews have been regular occurrences for all of the South African university presses. The mission-driven nature of university press publishing has also led to the use of specific kinds of business models. These have shifted over time, from being almost entirely non-profit, towards a more commercial and professional orientation. Funding for university presses is usually mixed, but is based in large part on support from their parent institutions. This funding may be direct or indirect, in the form of operating subsidies, infrastructure, or publication grants, and the proportion of costs that it covers will vary from one institution to the next. In addition, funding is usually supplemented by sales, as well as by departmental contributions, subventions from the authors themselves, or funds from donors, societies and foundations.⁵

In South Africa, all of the local university presses have gone through an evolution from their origins to the professional publishing houses of today. This is not a local phenomenon, but a world-wide trend, as Jagodzinski points out: “The earliest university presses in the United States were far from the professional operations of today. They often served as no more than job printers for universities, printing catalogues, unvetted faculty publications, or annual reports.”⁶ Within the apartheid era, the subsidised, non-profit model was dominant. The organisational structure of the university presses was restricted by the institutional set-up in which they found themselves. Initially, they were run somewhat informally, usually from the Library, with a part-time or full-time Publications Officer. As their duties expanded, so their staff complement also grew, usually along functional lines. Thus, the functions of the editorial team, administration, production and management were separated and

4 Philip Altbach (ed.), *The Changing Academic Workplace: Comparative Perspectives* (Boston: Centre for International Higher Education, 2000), p. 270.

5 Joseph S. Meisel, ‘American university presses, 1929–1979: Adaptation and Evolution,’ *Book History*, 13 (2010), p. 135.

6 C.M. Jagodzinski, ‘The university press in North America: A brief history,’ *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 40(1) (2008), p. 4.

became formal positions as time passed. The status of the manager or director also changed over time. This growing formalisation contrasts with the situation at most of the oppositional publishers, which did not develop, on the whole, beyond the point of a small, informally structured staff. This trend of professionalisation is echoed by Kerr:

In the beginning, the motive power in university press publishing was supplied by a few far-sighted university administrators, energetic scholars, broad-minded librarians, enlightened alumni, and devoted practitioners of the art of printing, and the incentive provided by such individuals remains today one of the most valuable assets of a university press. Now, however, the moving power has passed into the hands of a new group of professionals, men and women dedicated to the aims of scholarship but also trained in the techniques of publishing.⁷

The “motive power” behind the South African university presses was certainly a few far-sighted university administrators and researchers. The composition of the Publications Committees was a particularly important factor in the establishment, structure and values of the presses. It was through the committees and later through their directors that the university presses were in a position to reflect, maintain or challenge the ideologies of their institutions and of the wider society. The local university presses, in keeping with the ‘Oxford model,’ were dominated by their Publications Committees for many years. This was particularly the case when they were understaffed and located within other departments of the university. But the growing professionalisation of the staff led to the person of the director or manager playing an increasingly important role in determining the direction and editorial philosophy of the presses.

The director of a university press has an important dual role to play, both academic and managerial. In a proposal for the formation of a new Department of Publications at WUP, H.E. Andriés noted the following important characteristics of a “Controller” or publishing manager: “He (sic) should understand both English and Afrikaans and yet be neither Afrikaaner (sic) nor Englishman, but sympathetic to the points of view of both, and neither Jew nor anti-Jewish.”⁸ This rather bizarre description illustrates the political role that a director also

7 Kerr, quoted in N. Basbanes, *A World of Letters: Yale University Press 1908–2008* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 74.

8 H.E. Andriés, Unpublished proposal for the formation of a Department of Publications (28 July 1939), WUA, p. 4.

plays, whether wittingly or not, and their location within the broad pressures of the society at large. Percy Patrick, who was involved with the UNP, spoke of the need for a press manager who was “a man (sic) of calibre with great clarity of thought and with the strength of character to guard jealously the standards of all publications.”⁹ But these apparently inviolable academic standards have been shown to be heavily influenced by social pressures.

Thus, at the local university presses, there has been a clear though gradual move towards professionalisation, especially through the person of the director or publications officer. Over time, people with experience in publishing, and often commercial publishing, were appointed to this position. Their role was supplemented by increasing numbers of dedicated staff members, especially in the editorial and marketing spheres. This pattern is similar to that found in other parts of the world, where university presses have emerged from the foundations laid by library publishing programmes and publications offices.

At the same time as we see growing professionalism at the presses, there is a related trend in terms of the move from a male-dominated set-up, to the increasing inclusion of women, at first as editors and administrators, but later also as managers. This trend has become so pronounced that today, the university presses are all managed by professional publishers and by women. (The ratio of male to female authors, however, remains skewed towards men.) The late apartheid and transitional period saw a distinct shift in the editorial policies at the university presses, towards more risk-taking, more critical work, and a wider spectrum of authors. This chapter considers the role of the managers leading the presses at this crucial period, as well as the business models and missions of the university presses.

Towards Progressive Publishing at WUP

In spite of the sustained early support for a university press, Wits University was to question its decision to establish a press several times during the twentieth century. The tension between symbolic and financial capital usually lay at the heart of the problem. This reveals the importance of a clearly defined mission – and a clear understanding of that mission by the management group – for any university press. WUP’s mission was clearly linked to scholarly merit from the outset. But it was also bound up with its identity as a part of the broader university. A document produced in 1962 on the mission and functions of the WUP Publications Committee reveals this dual role:

9 P.E. Patrick, ‘University Publications’ (Unpublished report, 19 May 1969), UNA, p. 6.

The original purpose for which this Committee was created and funds placed at its disposal by the Council, seems to have been to make available in printed form (a) the research work and scholarly or scientific writings of members of the staff, and (b) theses of post-graduate students of the University presented for degrees higher than Honours.¹⁰

In this chapter, I will examine the insertion of the university presses into their parent institutions, and their inevitable links to that institution's symbolic capital, through the paratextual elements of their imprints and conventions around their title pages. This examination of the paratext enables us to examine the relationship between the presses and their host universities in a way that complements and supplements the archival record.

Wits University Press established its own imprint around December 1937, although all previous titles had made mention of the university in some form or another.¹¹ All titles would henceforth carry the precise wording "Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg" on the title pages and often, but not always, on the spine and back cover. This wording was scrupulously controlled, as revealed by a rather petty dispute in 1952 in regard to Dr Hamish Gilliland's *A Student's Key to the Monocotyledons of the Witwatersrand*. The Publications Committee Minutes of 30 October 1952 note that "Dr Gilliland had not consulted Mr (Percy) Freer about the final appearance of the book and that consequently the words 'U. of W. Press' appeared on the cover instead of the correct title 'WUP.'" This led to a tightening of procedures, revealing the centralised authority structure of the university.

WUP took over the publishing of inaugural lectures for the University in 1948, and this function continued until the mid-1980s, when rising costs made it unworkable to continue publishing all inaugural lectures.¹² In addition to regulating its own publications, WUP had to regulate other university publications, not all of which were published under the auspices of the university press. A 1965 report to the Wits Publications Committee complained that publications were "periodically produced with the name of the University as publisher but without the knowledge or approval of the W.U.P."¹³ Authority was delegated to the Publications Committee to supervise and, in a sense,

10 Memo of the Publications Committee (March 1962), WUA MISC PS/167/62.

11 See, for example the title page of the press's very first book from 1922, in Figure 2, which refers to the 'University of the Witwatersrand Press.'

12 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (15 October 1985), WUA S86/179, p. 2.

13 M.A. Hutchings, 'Witwatersrand University Press 1922–1969' (Unpublished report, 1969), WUA, p. 74.



**WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY PRESS
JOHANNESBURG**

FIGURE 13 *Colophon for WUP, 1970s*

approve all publications by members of the academic staff, academic departments and institutes within the university. This was clearly an ongoing problem: new regulations promulgated in 1984 state that “University publications” must, among other things, “have their layouts approved by the Publications Committee.”¹⁴

In the late 1970s, WUP began to use the crest of the University beside its name, as a colophon (a printer’s mark or logo), in addition to the text stating ‘Witwatersrand University Press’ (see Figure 13). This suggests that the Press wished to be more closely associated with the symbolic capital and prestige belonging to the over-arching institution, at a time when the Press itself was experiencing some decline. The mission of the Press remained a service function to the university, rather than independent publishing.

The period of high apartheid was a time of decline for WUP, with publishing output being cut due to weakened sales and revenue. With a lack of sustained institutional support, WUP was always attempting to improve its financial situation and battling against bureaucratic constraints. Funding is often contentious for university presses, with their planned expenses usually exceeding their annual grants. As early as the 1950s, WUP was already considering a change of editorial policy, to publish schoolbooks, as a means of gaining a regular source of income. A stark reminder of the economics of scholarly publishing is provided in a report on cost-cutting measures at WUP:

Tight financial control is maintained to squeeze value from each cent. At least two quotes are obtained for book printing; no invoices are passed without meticulous checking; cost-cutting is routine. For example, staff supply old newspapers for the inner wrapping of book parcels; incoming envelopes of all types are re-used; old proofs provide scrap paper; cartons

14 ‘Regulations: University publications’ (18 July 1984), WUA.

are re-labelled; one telephone extension has been relinquished; no lights are used in passages, stores and cloakrooms unless essential.¹⁵

The early years had already seen financial struggles and debates about ceasing the costly publication of books. But the 1960s saw reviews of the press that questioned its very right to existence. They argued, in effect, for the primacy of the 'market' over the 'cathedral.' A document produced in 1962 argues for the significance of the press's mission:

The original purpose for which this Committee was created and funds placed at its disposal by the Council, seems to have been to make available in printed form (a) the research work and scholarly or scientific writings of members of the staff, and (b) theses of post-graduate students of the University presented for degrees higher than Honours.¹⁶

This argument highlights the service role of the university press, as well as its support for the research function of the university: "the expanding activities of the Witwatersrand University Press and its important contribution to the reputation and status of the University."¹⁷ The argument in favour of the 'cathedral' was successfully used time and again. The increase in the scope of WUP's work is reflected in the growing size of its grant from the University: from £500 in 1939, this increased to £600 in 1940, and by 1954 had doubled to £1 200 (UNP's grant for the same period, in 1952, was just £450). In the 1970s, the subvention from the University rose to around R6 000 annually. At the same time, income from other sources, and particularly sales, became an important component of the funding of WUP, with a memo in 1960 remarking that two-thirds of funds were derived from sales of its books.¹⁸ The early 1980s, however, saw the loss of the subvention, as the university again indicated that it would not continue to fund a "revenue-making" concern.¹⁹ Each successful review also led to an expansion of the staff. Mrs Hutchings took on the role of full-time Publications Officer in 1964; while the first black staff member, Daniel Ndwambi – recorded only as "Dan" and described as "a willing and

15 N.H. Wilson, 'Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,' Memo submitted to Publications Committee (26/07/1983), WUA, p. 2.

16 Publications Committee memo (March 1962).

17 M.A. Hutchings, 'Witwatersrand University Press 1922–1969' (Unpublished report, 1969), WUA, p. 72.

18 Publications Committee memo (March 1962).

19 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (17 March 1983), WUA S83/380, p. 362.

efficient worker" in an unofficial history of the press – was appointed as a sales assistant in 1968.²⁰

Nora Wilson, who was colloquially known as Nan, joined WUP as a book-keeper in 1967 and worked her way up, taking over from Hutchings when she retired in December 1969. She was not an experienced publisher, but she grew into the position of Publications Officer of the University Press, becoming steadily more proficient as an administrator. Along with the Publications Committee under Desmond Cole, she saw the WUP through a very difficult period in the 1970s, when the Press was losing money and struggling from a lack of institutional support.

Throughout the 1970s, the press struggled to remain viable. This led to a reduction in the publishing list, as the number of titles previously published could not be sustained.²¹ The chief source of revenue during this period was the Bantu Treasury Series. In 1960, WUP had taken over the management of the series from the Department of African Studies, and this arrangement had an impact on how the titles were packaged and disseminated. In particular, the titles began to be prescribed for Bantu Education schools and teacher training colleges. Orders of the Bantu Treasury titles brought in welcome revenue to supplement the low income from monograph sales. For instance, sales rose from nearly 15 000 units in 1977, worth R22 713, to 47 642 units worth R43 378 in 1978, and to 58 611 units worth R69 096 in 1979 – in each case, representing more than half of the total sales revenue for that year.²² This suggests that the Bantu Treasury titles were not being reprinted or disseminated for the purpose for which they were first published, but rather for the functional purpose of making money out of Bantu Education schools – in spite of Cole's insistence that the "primary objective of the Bantu Treasury Series had never been prescription" for schools.²³ But Cole's predecessor, Clement Doke, had always been more pragmatic about the reach of the series. A note in *African Studies* expressed pleasure that "The Bantu Treasury Series...is obviously meeting a real need in Bantu literature. Of this series Volume 3, the late Sol. T. Plaatje's translation of Julius Caesar into Tswana, has just gone out of print, and the editors are arranging for a war-time reprint to supply its urgent requirement as a school text-book for examination purposes."²⁴

20 Hutchings, 'Witwatersrand University Press 1922–1969,' p. 78.

21 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (3 August 1971), WUA S71/620.

22 Figures compiled from WUA documents.

23 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (1986), WUA S86/309.

24 'Notes,' *African Studies* (1942), p. 152.

Even with the Bantu Treasury sales, the Press incurred deficits or an “over-commitment” for several years.²⁵ For instance, 1977 saw sales decline by around 10% compared to 1976, after 1976 had already seen a decline. In the late 1970s and 1980s, sales at WUP began to pick up again, with the 1978 sales figures reaching a high of R43 378 (almost double the figure of R22 713 in 1977). The recovery from the 1970s slump is illustrated in Table 1. Thus, by 1980, Wilson could record that “[t]he first year of the eighties was a bonanza for the Press. Book sales exceeded R80 000 and were the highest ever.”²⁶ Of these sales, 57% came from the Bantu Treasury Series, which provided a “steady income.” Similarly, of the sales in 1982 (which were only slightly up on 1980), 62% of revenue may be attributed to the Bantu Treasury Series. The dependence on sales from the Bantu Treasury Series meant that a decline was recorded whenever prescriptions fell. Thus, in 1981, sales income declined once more – not quantified in the records, as may be seen by Table 1 – due to reduced prescriptions for the following year. The sales made it possible to diversify the publishing list, to include more titles that lacked ‘saleability’ but that contributed more to the academic and political capital of WUP. The Press followed the expensive strategy of keeping stock of “as many books as might generously be prescribed, so that there was a vast overstock, printed ‘in case’ rather than when there were prescriptions.”²⁷

After the retirement of Desmond Cole as Chair in 1982, the Press found itself without strong leadership and subject to competing factions of the Publications

TABLE 1 *Sales from Bantu Treasury in terms of revenue and units sold, WUP*

Year	Revenue	Units
1977	R22 713	14 936
1978	R43 378	47 642
1979	R69 096	58 611
1980	R80 000 (approx.)	n/a
1981	n/a	n/a
1982	R88 960	92 207

SOURCE: A COMPILATION FROM THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (1977–1982), WUA.

25 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (3 August 1971), WUA S71/620.

26 Wits University Press Annual Report (1981), WUA S81/135, p. 220.

27 Interview with Ms G. (2014).

Committee. The 1982 WUP Annual Report paid tribute to Cole for his role in steering the Press:

Professor Desmond Cole, Chairman of the Publications Committee for 24 years, retired in December [1982]. As Chairman, Editor of *African Studies* and of the Bantu Treasury Series, Professor Cole made many personal sacrifices to build the Press into an organisation which is respected throughout the academic world.²⁸

The report also praised Cole's "practical experience and wide knowledge of all aspects of the administration of a scholarly publishing house,"²⁹ although there is little evidence in the records to suggest that he had actual publishing experience. A variety of academics, including Brian Cheadle (English), Reuben Musiker (Librarian), H.E. Paterson (Zoology), and Charles van Onselen (History), served on the Committee during the 1980s, but they appeared to see the Press as a fairly minor part of their duties. The task of managing the daily publishing operations was thus largely left up to the Publications Officer, Nora Wilson.

Over time, Wilson was successful in growing the staff structure, for instance in obtaining a Deputy Head and in lobbying for the Publications Officer to become a manager at an appropriate salary level. Upon Cole's retirement from the position of Chairman of the Publications Committee in 1982, it was considered time for Wilson's position to be upgraded. After a confidential proposal was submitted to the Publications Committee in 1984, it was "[a]greed that in terms of its decision to press for the appointment of a Manager/Editor, a formal request be submitted annually to the administration."³⁰ The manager would be responsible for implementation of University and Committee policies, staffing matters, financial control, and management of the publishing and bookselling activities of the Press. Wilson was promoted to this position – simply titled 'Head' of the WUP – and took on certain responsibilities from the Chairman. It was soon clear that she was more of a competent administrator than a far-sighted director for WUP: her focus fell on preserving the backlist, maintaining durable production standards and balancing the books. A colleague has commented that "[t]he books tended to be bound in a soft cover of textured artificial plastic cloth, of the kind then used for school books."³¹

²⁸ Wits University Press Annual Report (1982), WUA S83/240, p. 350.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (16 March 1984, 15 June 1984), WUA.

³¹ Interview with Ms G. (2014).

After Cole's retirement, the Publications Committee began to lobby for WUP's editorial policy to change. There was a feeling that service to the University had been over-emphasised and that this policy should be replaced with an aggressive and competitive policy of more commercial publishing. The Publications Committee set up a Working Group, consisting of Brian Cheadle, Reuben Musiker, H.E. Paterson, and Charles van Onselen, as well as Wilson, who "strongly argued that the Press has become rather passive and even negative in its approach, and that its future health and viability depended on the adoption of a much more active publishing policy in which opportunities be created and worthwhile works sought out and even commissioned from the academic community."³² Suggestions for a new philosophy included:

- active solicitation of manuscripts in specific fields such as Black writing in English, labour relations and African studies generally, in which innovative work was being done within the university, and also in areas such as law and the medical sciences for which Wits had a good reputation;
- student and school textbooks;
- "books with a more general appeal such as anthologies."³³

There was some disagreement as to whether the Press required "a new role and a new policy" allowing it to "operate as a profit-earning trade publisher similar to Ravan, David Philip or Ad Donker" – significantly, all of the publishers named here were oppositional publishers – or whether "[t]he new policy should not be seen as an attempt to convert the Press into a profit-earning trade publisher, but rather as an attempt to wean academics at the University to the idea that there are advantages in publishing their scholarly work through the Press."³⁴ But the publishing policy did not change to a great extent at this time, neither becoming much more oppositional nor much more commercial. It is only perhaps ten years later, in the 1990s, that a real shift in both of these directions could be seen.

The Working Group also took the opportunity to prepare a broader statement of WUP's publishing philosophy. They listed as the key aims of the press:

1. Publication and distribution of scholarly works
2. Service to the academic community
3. Service to Black writers and students

³² Publications Committee Working Group (Unpublished report, 1 August 1983, WUA), p. 1.

³³ Ibid., p. 3.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

4. Businesslike and economical management of its professional activities within the framework of its commitment to excellence, service and the spirit of university press publishing
5. Promotion of the interests of the University and of its reputation for scholarship.³⁵

This is a significant reworking of the original mission of WUP, and reveals the ongoing tension between the ‘cathedral’ – the publication of scholarly work – and the ‘market’ – the business of publishing and the reduction of the subsidy on which the press operated. But because the items were not spelt out in more detail, it is difficult to say exactly what was envisaged by, for instance, “service to black writers,” especially at a time when the Bantu Treasury Series was virtually stagnant and only a few new black authors were being published. It is also not clear that this new mission was ever implemented. The list of the 1980s is dominated by service publications, such as catalogues, inaugural lectures, conference proceedings and publications by the various research institutes. Popular scholarly books, often first published in the 1960s and 1970s, such as *South African Frogs* (1979) and *Trees and Shrubs of the Witwatersrand* (first published 1964), supplemented by *The Flora of the Witwatersrand* (1987), continued to sell well and to cross-subsidise other works. Significant scholarly works were few and far between, including Vernon Neppe’s groundbreaking *The Psychology of Déjà Vu* (1983) and Alan Jeeves’ *Migrant labour in South Africa’s mining economy* (1985, a co-publication with McGill Queen’s University Press in Canada). This is clearly a reactive publishing list, based on unsolicited manuscripts rather than coherent list-building.

Moreover, in a reflection of the largely white author profile at all of the university presses, there is little evidence of awareness of shifts in political thinking, such as the rise of Black Consciousness. Instead of explicit references to reform in South African society, a number of titles deal somewhat vaguely with a “changing southern Africa,” “changing South Africa,” and “changing society,” in the mid-1980s, when it had become clear that the Nationalist state’s hold on power was increasingly tenuous. There was greater concern over the effects of the academic boycott; a report at the end of 1985 argues that “[i]nadequate funds, a shortage of staff, and political boycotts continued to affect the Press’s operations.”³⁶

With relatively few authors submitting their manuscripts for consideration at this time, Wilson was asked to respond to a litany of “common complaints” from authors, and to motivate why Wits academics should continue to support

35 Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors,’ p. 1.

36 Report on the Activities of the WUP in 1985’ (27 February 1986), WUA 286/308, p. 1.

the Press. The complaints largely relate to delays in the refereeing and decision-making process and inadequate marketing and sales, but they also raise the more substantive issue of the Press being unwilling to take chances in its selection practices.³⁷ WUP, and by extension Wilson herself, are described as “nit-picking” and conservative, and this somewhat personal criticism may explain the defensive tone of her response – she labels authors as sometimes being ignorant, unrealistic, critical, and even hostile.³⁸

WUP was again the subject of an intensive review in 1987, which called into question its very existence – largely on the basis of affordability to the university. It was argued that the Press did not pay for itself. Arguments in support of WUP did not focus on affordability, except to note that the Press strove to keep publication costs low so as to reach a wider readership. Instead, it was argued, the Press should be retained because of the symbolic capital it contributed to the university, both in terms of its scholarly reputation and its political credibility in a time of transformation. The Press was once again found to be an integral part of university activities, and its role as a publishing outlet for local scholars was re-emphasised. It was argued that, “[i]n the present political climate, it was essential that the Press’s activities should continue and perhaps even expand”³⁹ – a reference to the academic boycott and resulting closure (or at least narrowing) of publishing platforms to South African academics. Thus, it was recommended, among other measures, that the Press should consider publishing more journals and more cross-over books for a wider audience, should encourage submissions from external authors, and should improve its distribution and marketing.⁴⁰ These suggestions were only implemented much later, probably due to a change in leadership at the Press.

After the formal review was completed, and the confirmation that the Press would continue its functions, the vacant positions on the staffing structure were finally advertised. Eve Horwitz (later Gray) was appointed Deputy Head in April 1988, and on Wilson’s retirement in 1989, she was promoted to Head. The position of ‘Publisher’ was finally created, and in that position Horwitz would play an important role in professionalising WUP and putting in place a rational publishing structure. She had recently obtained her MA in English, and was working as a junior lecturer in English at Wits. In addition, she was an experienced translator and had experience in editing and publishing in Europe. Gray notes that when she joined the Press, “it was in a state of decline, publishing very little.”⁴¹

37 Wilson, ‘Witwatersrand University Press and Authors.’

38 Ibid.

39 ‘Review of WUP’ (Unpublished archival report, 1987), WUA S87/415, p. 7.

40 Minutes of meetings of the Publications Committee (1987), WUA S87/768, p. 186.

41 Eve Gray, ‘Eve Gray: Summary’ (Unpublished document, 2008), WUA, p. 4.

FIGURE 14 *Colophon for WUP, 1990s*FIGURE 15
Colophon for WUP, 2000s

Her stated intention at the Press was thus to “rebuild the publishing list of WUP to make it an internationally recognised university publisher, putting in place a professional publishing structure and establishing an international network for co-publications.” The Publications Committee was reformulated, and provided a supportive space, in terms of both oversight and finances, for the list to be built up again.⁴² Gray remained at WUP until 1995, when she left to set up the new University of Cape Town Press. The move towards a more independent and progressive publishing policy at Wits is linked to the period during which it was managed by Eve Horwitz Gray.

After the major review of the Press and the introduction of innovations in the publishing operations, Gray also commissioned a new logo to signal the new, more commercial direction. This colophon – a curved, more artistic representation of the initials WUP, as shown in Figure 14 – was used from about 1990. This was also a time of increasing advertising, which showed some growth in the use of desktop publishing and graphics in marketing materials. The mission of the Press was updated around the same time, to reflect a more independent and commercial orientation. In advertising materials from the period, the new colophon is linked to a new, more progressive image for the Press as well.

In the early 2000s, the logo was again updated, and the name officially shortened to Wits University Press (rather than Witwatersrand). It is now often colloquially known as Wits Press. The current colophon represents a stylised W, which is reminiscent of the shape of two open books (see Figure 15). The link to the authority and status of the parent institution has thus diminished over time, as the Press has gained renown in its own right. The output of the Press also became more outspoken over time, with a general shift on the continuum towards the more oppositional categories.

⁴² Interview with Ms G. (2014).

Professional Publishing at UNP

UNP followed a similar pattern to WUP, with the wording of its name: Natal University Press, University of Natal Press, and later University of KwaZulu-Natal Press after the mergers in the higher education sector of 2004. At first, the Press used just the words, “University Press, Natal” or “University of Natal Press,” on the title page of its publications.⁴³ Although fluid at first, it was eventually decided that the wording was definitely *not* Natal University Press – a semantic matter that was debated at some length by the Committee, according to the Minutes of 27 October 1969 – but rather University of Natal Press. For example, the 1953 title, *Manual of a Thematic Apperception Test for African Subjects* by Sidney Lee, used the words, “Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1953” on its title page (see Figure 16).

In the 1970s, Natal University had found an energetic champion for the Press in the person of Percy Patrick. After Brown’s retirement from UNP in 1973, there was a vacuum in terms of management. To resolve this situation, in 1974, Patrick was seconded by the University Principal to run both the Publicity Office and the University Press. He had been involved with the Press, in his capacity as Public Relations Officer, for a number of years already. Having had previous experience in publishing as the production manager for SABC publications, Patrick made a concerted effort to improve the publishing procedures at the university, producing a report on ‘University Publications’ (1969) and attempting to formalise the publishing philosophy of the university press. At this time, the mission of UNP was set out as being to:

1. Publish and disseminate to a wider public the results of research and survey work carried out within the University, and
2. Make available meritorious publications which could not be published commercially.⁴⁴

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PIETERMARITZBURG

FIGURE 16 *Colophon for UNP, up to 1970s*

43 See Figure 3, which shows the title page of the first book, using the Afrikaans words “Universiteitspers, Natal” (‘University Press, Natal’).

44 C.W. Abbott, ‘University of Natal Press: Forward Planning 1973–1975’ (Unpublished report to the Press Committee, 10 April 1972), p. 1.

Patrick understood the importance of a university press, often quoting the words of John Brown, publisher of Oxford University Press, that it was “University Extension work of the finest kind.”⁴⁵ In examining the quality of publishing at the University of Natal, Patrick used one of Brown’s papers as a guide – overtly applying the Oxford model to UNP, and measuring the latter against this yardstick. The mission described above recalls that of the ‘Oxford model.’

Patrick also attempted to declare a more independent identity for the Press by submitting a design for a more appropriate and individual colophon in August 1974. Notably, Patrick was a public relations expert, and his was the first to attempt to improve the image of the press as an institution in its own right. The new design was never used, as Patrick’s role was cut short by illness just a few months later. He was to retire from the university in 1975 before passing away in 1976.

As a result, another plan had to be made, and Margery Moberly – affectionately known as Mobbs – was temporarily released from some of her Library duties for two hours a day to assist with the duties of part-time Secretary to the Press. Her key task was to complete the publication of *The Eland’s People*, an important scholarly work, but she was expected to continue her work in launching the University Archives at the same time. For a time, the Archives were housed in the same building as the Press, until both had expanded to the point that new premises were required in the 1980s. As the part-time set-up was initially intended to be a temporary arrangement, a detailed report on ‘Staffing the University Press’ was produced to illustrate the actual staffing requirements and to assist planning for the future. This report detailed the tasks of just two staff members: the Press Secretary (a role played by Ms Cook and later by Ms Cockcroft) and a proposed Press Manager.⁴⁶ The proposals were accepted, and Moberly stepped into the role of full-time manager or “Press Organiser” on a three-year trial basis, from 1978. During this time, the Press was required to show that a full-time manager would make it more efficient and effective, which Moberly was evidently able to do – in 1981, she was made full-time, and permanent, Publisher to the University. Moberly, who had worked at the University since 1968, would remain with the Press until her retirement in 1997.

The Moberly era led to the professionalisation of the Press, and a rise in the standards for accepting manuscripts. Moberly also resisted the commercialisation of UNP. A 1990 internal document spells out that “[t]he Press was established to perform the traditional role of university presses throughout the western world, namely to serve the academic community and the world of

45 Patrick, ‘University Publications,’ p. 1.

46 M. Moberly, ‘Staffing the University Press’ (Unpublished report, 1976), UNA.

scholarship by publishing academic and scholarly works which because of their specialized and academic nature are often not considered for publication by commercial publishers.”⁴⁷ The identical mission had been set out in a document called ‘Terms of Reference,’ as early as the 1970s, and further formalised with the drafting of a constitution in the early 1990s. UNP’s dual role was recognised in these mission statements: “The Press should be allowed to grow in order to expand both its book publishing activities and its direct services to the University.”⁴⁸ But, as at WUP, Moberly battled constantly to retain a viable subvention from the university for the activities of the Press: “The University should accept the principle that its Press is a service and not primarily a money-making organization.”⁴⁹

Correspondence from the 1960s reveals the Press arguing strongly for the right to retain its subsidy, even when a profit was made in a financial year. It was even necessary for the Chairman of the Press Committee, G.S. Nienaber, to write to the Finance Officer spelling out the mission-driven nature of the university press:

It is not the function of the University Press to compete with the publishing trade in the production of commercially profitable books. If we were to venture into that field, our activities would soon lead to sharp criticism of the University. The University Press has the special function of publishing books which are academically meritorious and which should be published, but which because of their specialised nature, seem to be of interest to a limited body of readers, usually subject specialists, and are therefore not acceptable to commercial publishers as economic propositions.⁵⁰

Twenty years later, Moberly was still making a very similar argument: “Despite repeated protestations that academic publishing cannot be a profitable enterprise we are still being urged to publish more books that sell large numbers, to make profits, to become self-supporting, etc.”⁵¹ This “competition with the publishing trade” included the decision not to publish less academic, more politically activist books, and the press continued to focus on books of a “specialised nature.” This would lead to the press being more cautious in its publishing decisions.

47 University of Natal Press, ‘Response to the Report of the 1988 Review Committee’ (Unpublished memorandum tabled 27 March 1990), UNA, p. 1.

48 ‘University of Natal Press,’ *NU Digest*, 2(4) (1981), p. 4.

49 Ibid.

50 Correspondence of G.S. Nienaber to E.L. Beyers (30 April 1968), UNA.

51 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (23 March 1988), UNA.

UNP's financial records show some growth in sales and income, but the costs of publishing high-quality scholarly books were an ongoing concern. In 1970, for instance, the balance sheet reveals an operating loss in spite of improved sales, largely due to increased costs.⁵² The publishing list was also unbalanced, in that in any given year a single title might account for up to a third of the income – in 1968, for instance, the top seller was Audrey Cahill's *T.S. Eliot and the Human Predicament*, with the sales of 636 copies accounting for 28% of the total income of R4 376 for the year. This is a title that could have no political impact, by reason of its subject matter. By the mid-1970s, however, the Press was regularly operating at a profit; 1975 saw a profit of R2 121,93, and a university grant of R6 000 – about the same level as WUP at this point. The non-commercial nature of the Press may also be seen in the fact that the book *The Eland's People* took four years to break even – a state of affairs that was considered “highly satisfactory.”⁵³ With cost-cutting measures in place, in 1981 sales were to reach an “unprecedented peak” of R50 000, compared to just R29 000 in 1980. A letter from the Principal to Moberly in 1984 reveals the university's ongoing interest in the Press becoming self-sustaining: “Both the productivity and the profitability of the University of Natal Press are noted with considerable pleasure.”⁵⁴ The Press thus moved from a situation where it had insufficient funding for more radical, potentially loss-making works, to one where its income was seen as important for university coffers.

Moberly also took up the task of implementing a new colophon design, although it was to take several years and a number of designs before the now familiar graphic design was selected, in 1982. Like WUP's curved letters, this design was based on the initials UNP, with a large U, followed by a smaller n and p running into each other. This design, shown in Figure 17, may still be seen on the Press buildings in Pietermaritzburg.



UNIVERSITY OF NATAL PRESS

FIGURE 17 Colophon for UNP, 1980s

52 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (20 August 1970), UNA.

53 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (1980).

54 Correspondence of P. de V. Booysen to M. Moberly (20 November 1984), UNA.

An obituary for Moberly, who passed away in 2008, notes that, “[i]nitially termed the manager of the University of Natal Press, she was eventually awarded the rather grand title of Publisher to the University and built up the press from a shaky start as a somewhat amateur and part-time operation to a highly professional institution, internationally respected for the quality of its scholarly publications.”⁵⁵ The newspaper *The Witness*, in its obituary, placed her contribution in the following context:

Perhaps her greatest triumph as a publisher was the production of *Pietermaritzburg 1838–1988, A New Portrait of an African City* to mark the capital’s sesquicentennial. It was a project which she both conceptualised and drove with relentless energy and enthusiasm. Edited by John Laband and the present Msunduzi Municipal Manager Rob Haswell (then on the staff of the university), the book embodied contributions by an astonishing 73 authors from a wide range of academic disciplines. It covered virtually every possible aspect of the city’s history from two million years before the present to what were at that time contemporary developments.⁵⁶

Another description remarked: “She has been a most stimulating colleague, and her endless fountain of ideas will be a source greatly missed. So too will be her editorial expertise as a professional publisher.”⁵⁷ Moberly is thus remembered with affection, but colleagues at the university in the 1980s also noted that she was highly autocratic in her decision-making. With her hands-on approach to management, she ran the press as a tight ship and left a personal imprint on the publishing output as a result.

For example, Moberly was personally interested and deeply involved in the local history of Pietermaritzburg and Natal; she served on the editorial board of the journal *Natalia* and regularly contributed articles on local history to *The Witness*. This interest in local history can clearly be seen in the publishing list of UNP. A colleague from this period remembers:

...the long-time University Publisher, Marjorie (Mobbs) Moberly, concentrated on the publication of Natal and Zulu history. This was her particular interest and History was in those days a powerful department. It was crucial research and writing but I suspect was also a way of evading conflict with the censors and playing it safe.⁵⁸

55 Jack Frost, ‘Margery (Mobbs) Moberly (1938–2008),’ *Natalia*, 38 (2008), p. 82.

56 Anon., ‘Margery (Mobbs) Moberly,’ *The Witness* (Durban) (19 June 2008).

57 ‘Editorial,’ *Natalia*, 20 (1990), p. 5.

58 Interview with Dr M, 2012.

The service mandate at UNP diminished in importance during Moberly's tenure. For instance, inaugural lectures were the preserve of the Press until 1975, and then resumed after a brief hiatus. In the 1980s, there was much discussion as to the best means of publishing such lectures, which were considered, frankly, unnecessary and even a waste of money. This discussion led to the gradual phasing out of inaugural lectures as part of the press's service mandate. In general, though, UNP did not have a service-oriented mandate to such an extent as Unisa and WUP, although a manual, 'A Short Guide to Publishing,' was produced in 1982 to assist academics to produce and to standardise their publications in accordance with university regulations. As a result of this role in standardising university publications, there was tension at times between the Press and those departments that regularly published in their own name, such as the Department of Economics and the Institute for Social Research. These independent institutes produced some of the most oppositional research outputs that came out in the name of the University and its Press, but the role of the Press was one of service rather than commissioning.

Moberly was also involved with the Alan Paton Centre, which reveals her political inclinations as liberal. The head of the Press Committee in the 1980s, Colin Gardner, shared these convictions, although he took them somewhat further by joining the Liberal Party of South Africa and working with the South African Institute of Race Relations and the United Democratic Front. Gardner joined the African National Congress in 1990. He was followed on the Press Committee by John Milton, a legal scholar and Dean of the Faculty of Law. He was associated with "free thought on all matters, especially the politics of South Africa."⁵⁹ Milton participated fully in university life, and dedicated his career to the University of Natal. His role on the Press Committee should be interpreted in this light – as a service to the University, rather than a passion for scholarly publishing.

After Moberly's retirement in the early 1990s, Natal again followed a similar trajectory to Wits, appointing a practising publisher to direct its Press and to bring in more professional publishing practices. Glenn Cowley, who was to remain as Director until his retirement in 2008, was appointed at this time, and took the press into the new century. For example, after discussion relating to the direction and editorial policies of the Press, an imprint was especially created at UNP, named Hadedha Books, to publish books that "look beyond the academic community to the wider reading public."⁶⁰ This is a clear signal of

59 A. Dickson, 'John Milton: A fair man,' in S.V. Hooctor and P-J Schwikkard (eds.), *The Exemplary Scholar: Essays in Honour of John Milton* (Cape Town: Juta, 2007).

60 Hadedha publicity leaflet (1993), UNA.



FIGURE 18
Colophon for UNP, 2000s

growing commercialisation, and a shift in the mission of the university press, in the post-apartheid era.

The name and logo would change again once the university had merged to become the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in 2004, with the inclusion of an African-flavour beadwork element and the stylised letters spelling out UKZN Press (see Figure 18). Like WUP, then, the Press thus has gradually moved away from a direct identity with the parent institution, in terms of its brand identity.

The “Dainty Iron Lady” at Unisa Press

Unisa Press followed a similar trajectory of becoming more professional over the years, but it did not take the same path towards progressive publishing. The Press’s dual role, of publishing and service, is summed up in its mission as described in an undated document titled ‘Functions of the Department of Publishing Services’:

1. Publish and sell prescribed texts and other academic manuscripts;
2. Assist with the publication of inaugural lectures, papers, Unisa journals, etc.⁶¹

Primarily, the focus of the publishing philosophy for Unisa’s Publishing Services department entailed the publishing of scholarly texts by Unisa academics, conceived and intended for both an internal academic and student audience. There was at first almost no focus on traditional publishing functions, including the development of a coherent publishing list, the structures and kinds of staff required, or the channels of dissemination and types of access that may

61 ‘Functions of the Department of Publishing Services’ (Unpublished report to the SPC, n.d.), UPA.

be demanded. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in the fact that the ISBN allocation was not solely for the Press, but for the university as a whole. As in many other cases, the Press ended up administering a function on behalf of the university, retaining little or no authority over such processes.

For instance, a key role was the publication of the inaugural lectures of new professors and the lectures given by distinguished visitors. The university presses, in South Africa as elsewhere, have played an important part in standardising the expectations and requirements for professors to attain that status, thus contributing to the professionalisation of academia in South Africa. The early publications at Unisa Press clearly reflect this role: the first title came in at just 33 pages, and the majority were under 50 pages, with a few as large as 90 pages at a time – which is typical of the inaugural lectures that these early publications represented. Thus, the publishing of inaugural lectures was considered an integral part of the mission for Unisa Press from the very beginning.

Unisa's somewhat limited and service-oriented publishing programme was considered highly successful over its first ten years. Six inaugural lectures were published in the first year, and up to 145 titles were published in the three main categories in the first 12 years. As of 1965, bibliographies were added to the list (series D), and later works of a more mathematical or scientific nature (series M). A typical title in series D was the annual *Summaries of Theses Accepted by the University of South Africa* (clearly showing the publishing department's role as providing services to the university), while the first M series title was *Invariance Properties of Variational Principles in General Relativity*.

The position of a dedicated and professional publications officer (a *publikasiebeampte* or *uitgewersbeampte*) at Unisa was first created and filled in 1973, with Eugene van Heerden, former news editor of *The Star* newspaper, taking up the position. He served as Publications Officer until 1980, then Acting Director when the position was first created, and was finally confirmed as Director. In 1977, the staff was expanded with the recommendation to hire a copyright officer, contracts officer and designer. As of 1978, the sales section was incorporated into a fully fledged Department of Publishing Services. Van Heerden's Assistant Director was Phoebe van der Walt, and between them they oversaw a group of 26 staff members. The staff complement was much larger than the other university presses because of the service mandate of the Press and the University's insistence on keeping all functions in-house.

The transition to a more professional publishing house was not entirely smooth, as evidenced by minutes of the monthly production meetings from the 1970s (the so-called *dagbestuur*, or 'daily management'). For instance, some of the publications took up to four years from approval to publishing. Relying

largely on unsolicited manuscripts rather than a focused publishing philosophy or specific niche areas, the Press would allocate priority according to the degree of attention still necessary to complete a manuscript and take it through the production process. Problems that arose regularly included delays in delivery from the printers, the use of Unisa's Production Department for typesetting and printing when urgent, contacting authors who lived overseas and delays in correcting proofs, for instance (a problem that may only have been overcome with the widespread use of e-mail some years later), and delays with authors handing in their manuscripts on time, even when prescribed for students.

The period of growing professionalism in the 1970s also saw a huge proliferation of series and categories for publishing. These included:

- Manualia
- Studia
- Documenta
- Miscellanea, a useful catch-all category which included both books and journals
- Miscellanea Congregalia
- Miscellanea Anthropologia
- Miscellanea Criminalia.

The service mandate was thus of great importance at Unisa, where, "[i]n addition to its task of attending to the publication of the University's Communications, the Committee has to take care of the publication of the Handbook and Reprint Series, and it has also had added to its functions the watching brief over departmental bulletins."⁶² There were concerns about various research departments and institutes in Unisa starting up 'mini-publishers' to produce their own publications; these included the Institute for Foreign and Comparative Law, Transport Economics Research Centre, and the Institute for Criminology. Van Heerden complained of this unregulated proliferation of publishing in the name of the university, asking whether it was "desirable that there are now, especially where Institutes and Centres will from now on manage their own book production, various small publishers mushrooming up with occasional references to UNISA as the mother body? Can all these publications not, with the necessary prominence given to the Institutes and Centres, and where necessary to their financial benefit, be handled by our own central UNISA publisher?"⁶³

62 B. Goedhals, 'Communications of the University of South Africa,' *Unisa* (1970), p. 1.

63 Correspondence of E. van Heerden to Vise-Rektor (Opleiding) (20 July 1977), UPA, my translation.

This query reveals that, where Unisa was responsible for the publication of more politically aware and possibly contentious material, it was usually under the auspices of an independently funded research institute, and not the (centrally funded) university press.

Later years saw a gradual shift in emphasis from service publications to scholarly books. A separate ISBN was later created for the publication of inaugural lectures, to distinguish such 'service' publications from the increasingly professional books and monographs being produced. The publication of another service publication, the Summaries of Theses, ceased in 1972, due to high costs and low sales.⁶⁴ However, while the Press was moving in a more professional and commercial direction, analysis of the actual output shows that the commitment to and focus on Unisa study material and services to the university would remain a high priority.

It was only as late as 1970 that Unisa titles would include the words 'Unisa Publication' on the inside front cover for the first time, in an initial attempt at branding the university press imprint. Previously, all titles had simply carried the name of the University of South Africa, in Afrikaans or English depending on the language of the title itself. In the 1980s, the crest of the university was increasingly used, in addition to the words, "Published by the University of South Africa" (see the example of the title page in Figures 19 and 20).

Van Heerden left the Press in the late 1980s. For a brief period after his resignation, the Acting Director until February 1989 was Mr S.J.J. van den Berg. He was then replaced by an internal appointment, Ms van der Walt, who had been at the Press since 1980.

As Director – and the first woman to head a department at Unisa – Phoebe van der Walt would introduce various innovations, drawing on her experience in commercial and educational publishing, as well as changes in the publishing philosophy. The publishing department was divided under Van der Walt into the following divisions: administration; service publications for the university; printing and publishing; business (essentially sales and royalties); finances; and journals. The functions of the Publishing Services department, as it was known, were heavily tilted towards service rather than scholarly publishing: to publish and sell prescribed works and other academic manuscripts, and to assist with the publishing of inaugural lectures and Unisa journals. Almost all aspects of publishing at Unisa were covered in-house, including copy-editing, typesetting and printing (at the university's Print Production department, which houses the largest printing press in the Southern Hemisphere – a reflection of Unisa's role as a distance education university, which prints and posts

64 Minutes of meetings of the Senate Publications Committee (21 June 1972), UPA.

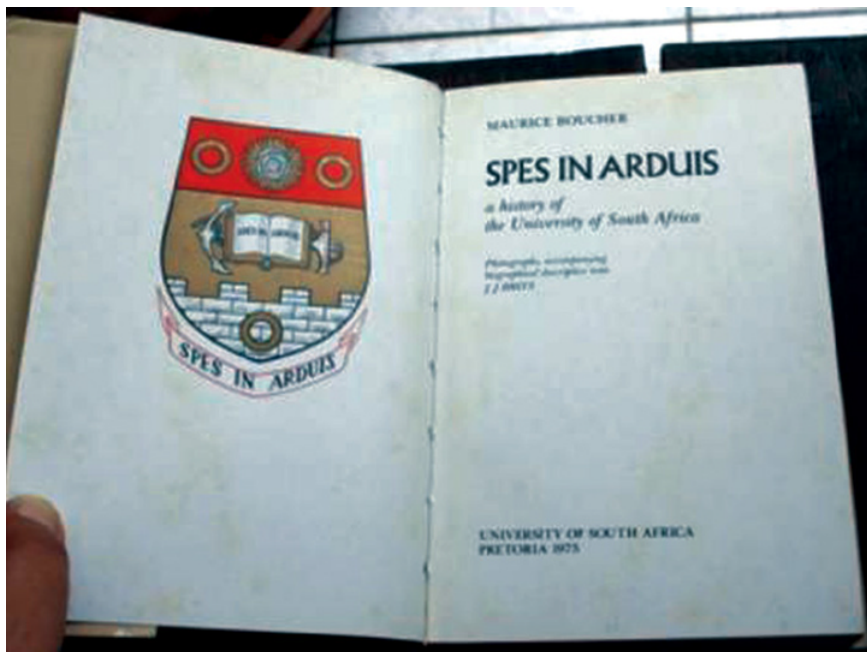


FIGURE 19 *Title page for Spes in Arduis, 1973*



FIGURE 20 *Unisa colophon, 1980s*

study material to a large number of students). The hope was that “...the University may possibly one day become largely independent of commercial printers.”⁶⁵ Van der Walt would shape the Press until her promotion to Executive Director in 2004, and retirement in 2006:

65 Senate Publications Committee Report (1967), UPA, p. 128.

She's one of South Africa's leading publishers, having taken the then Department of Publishing Services from near closure in 1989 to the respected position now held in the publishing world by Unisa Press. ... She's also a hard-headed business woman: since 1990, when Unisa Press stopped receiving Council grants to fund its operations, she's managed to build up a reserve fund of R5,2 million, and she hasn't done it by publishing Mills and Boons.⁶⁶

The Press did not publish popular material such as that implied by "Mills and Boons," but it was also not widely respected for its scholarly output. Van der Walt worked with Siegfried Grässer (of the Department of Mathematics) as Chair of the Publications Committee during the 1980s, until his death in 1990. The Publications Committee was instrumental in what was selected for publication, and remained conservative even in the transitional era of the late 1980s and 1990s.⁶⁷ The Press received a much larger grant than the other university presses – in 1988, the Publications Committee recorded in its minutes that it required an average subsidy of R83 000 per year⁶⁸ – but at the same time, a far greater scope of work was required. The subsidy was thus closely related to the production of certain categories of publications, which certainly did not include the more activist kind of books. The subsidy has become more modest over time (in real monetary terms), and the ensuing need to adhere to the University's financial practices and procedures has introduced a level of red tape that is unfortunate in a publishing house. The Press had very little latitude, within the rigid funding allocations and bureaucratic constraints of Unisa, to develop a real publishing list for much of the apartheid period. Notably, however, its niche publishing and the continuing subsidy insulated the Press from the difficult period experienced by many other publishers in South Africa in the 1990s, with changes in the school curriculum and reduced buying of school textbooks.

Van der Walt has been aptly described as "the dainty iron lady."⁶⁹ Like Moberly, she micro-managed the activities and output of the Press and was known for her firm managerial style. This may be seen in the record books of the Press, in which every item is signed off by the Director, as well as instances where Van der Walt got involved in editing papers and even designing covers

66 Anon., 'Women transformed and transforming,' *Unisa Link* (2003), p. 1; A.I. le Roux, 'Progressio gesels met Phoebe van der Walt,' *Progressio*, 13(2) (1991), pp. 11–15.

67 Interview with Prof. G, 2012.

68 Minutes of meetings of the Senate Publications Committee (1988), UPA.

69 Unisa Press Facebook page (26 June 2013).

for journals. But Van der Walt also had academic inclinations, writing several academic papers on distance education and the role of the Press and the broader Department of Production. She also oversaw projects researching various potential innovations for both the Press and the broader Production Department, such as print-on-demand.

And she can be credited with professionalising the Press, especially after attending a professional publishing course at Stanford University. While for ease of use I primarily refer to 'Unisa Press' in this study, it was in fact only under Van der Walt's direction, in 1994, that the name Unisa Press would be introduced to describe the former Department of Publishing Services. The Press was also increasingly required to examine its own sustainability and the possibilities of cost recovery. Thus, in 1989, a consultant named Milly F. du Bois and Associates sent in a proposal to Unisa for evaluating "the viability of a fully fledged publishing house within the university environment,"⁷⁰ with the aim of ensuring that "it no longer constitutes an undue drain on the finances of the organisation."⁷¹ The proposal was not approved, but resulted in a change in terms of which the financing of Unisa Press became much more dependent on sustainability. Previously, the University Council had provided all funding for publications, but after this time the Press had to generate funds for its scholarly books. A self-sustaining, separate budget was created for this purpose, and it indeed proved possible to finance scholarly books through sales, permissions income, cross-subsidisation, and occasional sponsorships. The journals and other service publications, and the operations of the Press as a whole (i.e. staff salaries and overheads) continued to be subsidised by the University, lending a form of protection that is common in scholarly publishing.

The proposal also suggested initiatives to move the press to a more commercial footing, to commission more manuscripts, and to adopt more flexible policies and procedures. The detailed proposal included an analysis of the market segmentation of the press. The committee considering the potential commercialisation of publishing turned down the proposal, arguing that an independent business with a commercial, profit-making focus would not fit well with the mission and objectives of the University as a whole. It was recommended that the subsidy be continued and that the Press remain a fully integrated department of Unisa. Indeed, it seems that the only concrete result from these suggestions was the change of name to Unisa Press.

70 Correspondence of P. van der Walt to Milly F. du Bois and Associates (28 November 1989), UPA.

71 Correspondence of Milly Du Bois to Phoebe van der Walt (11 May 1989), UPA.

However, the change in financing also led to a shift in priority and focus in terms of the publishing philosophy of Unisa Press. The Press had previously been prevented, up to a point, from publishing books which were expected to be commercially successful, so as not to compete with other publishers. This policy had meant that certain titles had to be relinquished once production costs were recovered, as they were deemed too profitable! One example was the *North Sotho Dictionary* and other dictionaries, which were taken over by commercial publishers. The policy was spelt out clearly: "When a person applies to the Publications Committee to have his/her manuscript published, written proof should be tendered, where applicable, together with the application that two or more external publishers have been approached and that they are not interested in publishing the manuscript."⁷² With the later shift to a self-sustaining, cost-recovery model, the Press was able to attract different kinds of titles, and develop a credible front- and back-list as well as a reserve fund. It is only from the 1990s that Unisa Press could start commissioning. From the mid-1990s, with the name of the Department of Publishing Services formally changing to Unisa Press, this wording began to be used on title pages.

An author remembers a tremendous amount of activity at the Press:

The publishing department is our last stop. I am introduced to Mrs Van der Walt who is in charge of this area. I am simply amazed at the amount of publishing that is done here: the largest university publishing house in the country? in the world? I don't remember which. Mrs Van der Walt is very polite and efficient. She is excited to hear that I am the author of one of their publications, and one of their hottest items at that. She orders tea and meanwhile discusses with me some of the technicalities of Unisa's relationship with primary publishers whose out-of-print books they republish. She brings out records of the sales of my book, and I realize that it isn't doing too badly.⁷³

This quote highlights some of the contradictions of Unisa publishing: while it was certainly the largest university press in South Africa in terms of staff and funding, it was not the most prolific in terms of producing good, original, scholarly publications. The republication of books was a service function for

72 Minutes of meetings of the Senate Publications Committee (18 April 1980), UPA, p. 3, my translation.

73 Daniel Kunene, 'Return to the Roots: South Africa Thirty Years Later,' *Wisconsin Academy Review* (Winter 1994/95), p. 42.

some of the academic departments and their students. It also did not have the best sales record, probably because of its non-commercial orientation and failure to adequately market the books produced.

But the publishing philosophy changed markedly once Publishing Services truly became a university press. There was an immediate shift to a more diverse publishing mission, as Van der Walt explained:

It used to be University policy to concentrate on research and publications of high academic merit. Now we are moving into the textbook market. We are developing joint ventures both locally and internationally which could be very advantageous to the publishers as well as to our students. Distance education is seen as one of the solutions to the educational backlog in the country.⁷⁴

Even with the move to include more cross-over texts, the Press was never to attain the same reputation for oppositional publishing as WUP and UNP would. Conservatism would linger for somewhat longer.

It was only after the higher education mergers in 2004, that a number of logo designs were considered for an individualised colophon. For a brief period, a bird design was used as the logo of the press (see Figure 21). However, with growing corporatisation of the institution, the parent institution required that the logo be changed to fit in with the standardised corporate image of the university. The standard elements of the brand name 'Unisa,' the colours, and the visual element of the flames, were thus retained, with the word 'PRESS' added at the end (as shown in Figure 22). This is the same as for other institutes and centres at Unisa, and reveals the view that Unisa Press is a department of the university, and not in any way an individual entity. The service mandate of the Press, in keeping with this view, is emphasised at Unisa, to a greater extent than its mission to promote and disseminate scholarly communication and knowledge production.

A New Mission: UCT Press

The University of Cape Town (UCT) Press was a new entrant to the academic publishing scene only at a much later stage than the other university presses described in this study, being established in 1993. Before this time, there was certainly interest in and support for a university press at UCT, as evidenced by

⁷⁴ Quoted in Sally Taylor, 'Academic publishing in Southern Africa,' *Publishers' Weekly* (2 October 1997).

FIGURE 21 *Unisa Press colophon, 2000s*FIGURE 22 *Unisa Press colophon, current*

the repeated requests for information on the operations of WUP – Wilson recorded four such requests for information between 1968 and 1983.⁷⁵

The advisory academic committee came before the Press, in this case, as the initiative came from a small group of scholars: Martin Hall, who was chair of the Board of the Centre for African Studies (CAS) at UCT and Brian Warner, a professor in the Department of Astronomy, along with a small group of academics who supported the new initiative. They were joined by Rose Mény-Gibert, who managed the Press as part of the CAS. The proposed business model was not the same as the other university presses, as it was intended to employ digital publishing technologies (such as print on demand) to avoid some of the problems experienced by the other university presses, specifically relating to small print runs and markets. Perhaps the local market was not ready for this initiative – and the local publishing services could not provide adequate quality at the right price – but in any case the university was disappointed that the press did not become self-sustaining fairly quickly. Instead of continuing with a subvention as at the other university presses, a fairly radical decision was made, to bring in a commercial publishing partner. According to Gray, “it started out with a mission to use print-on-demand techniques to produce short-run academic books. It might have been ahead of its time, or ahead of the technology, in this aim, as neither production quality standards nor profitability met expectations. It was taken over by Juta in 1995, in an experimental partnership between a commercial publisher and a university press.”⁷⁶

75 N.H. Wilson, ‘University presses in South Africa’ (Unpublished report, 1987), WUA S87/414, p. 165.

76 Eve Gray, ‘Academic Publishing in South Africa,’ in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds.), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 177.



FIGURE 23
UCT Press colophon

One of South Africa's oldest publishers and an academic textbook specialist, Juta bought two-thirds of the shares, and later took full control. The Editorial Board continued to function in an advisory capacity, and Mény-Gibert continued as director, with the addition of the services of Glenda Younge. Eve Gray, who had been Director of Wits University Press before moving to Juta, was given editorial control. While the Press has published some significant works, mostly from UCT academics, it struggled throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The familiar problems of university press publishing were compounded by the pressures of academic publishing, as South Africa's education sector was restructured.

The press continues to function in this form, as an imprint of Juta (see colophon at Figure 23), which Darko-Ampem describes as a "unique combination of academic and commercial interest [which] represents a consolidation of academic excellence and integrity with sound business and commercial direction and resourcing."⁷⁷ This model has been attempted in other contexts, such as Australia, but has seldom met with success. Indeed, it is still not clear whether the hybrid form has been successful, as there remains a tension between ongoing demands for profitability and the public profile strategy that was envisaged when Juta went into partnership with UCT. The press is still attempting to manage this balancing act, but it has managed to re-emerge after a period where very little was published.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The university presses functioned as departments of their respective parent institutions, rather than as autonomous business units, and this constrained

⁷⁷ K.O. Darko-Ampem, 'Scholarly Publishing in Africa: A case study of the policies and practices of African university presses' (DPhil dissertation, University of Stirling, 2003), p. 128.

⁷⁸ Eve Gray and Michelle Willmers, *Case Study 4: UCT Press* (Cape Town: Opening Scholarship Project, Centre for Educational Technology, 2009).

the publishing decisions which could be taken, as well as decisions relating to strategy, structure, and staffing. Moreover, the varying value attributed to the university presses can be traced in the fluctuating subventions given by their institutions, and by the frequent reviews of their operations and, indeed, their *raison d'être*. The primary source of funding was a subvention from their parent institutions; they were then expected to recover costs as far as possible. The lack of dedicated facilities – in contrast to the facilities provided for, say, the libraries of these institutions – strongly suggests that the importance of the university presses to their parent institutions has fluctuated, and that they are seldom seen as being of primary interest to the university administrators.

In recent years, the pressures to become more profitable have grown increasingly intense, with the result that all manuscripts are now evaluated on the basis of academic merit as well as whether they can cover their own costs. Previously, the non-profit orientation of the university presses meant that they did not always operate according to viable business principles. Concerns are repeatedly raised in the literature about the sustainability of this business model, as in the following report: “Some in-house university publishers in South Africa publish books on a not for profit basis and simply wish to cover costs on the sale of books. These books are by and large sold at a rate far below the market value for equivalent publications.”⁷⁹ Nonetheless, income was very important for all of the university presses, even if only intended on a cost-recovery basis.

It is hardly surprising, given the institutional and funding constraints, that the presses were not as free in their editorial philosophy and publishing selection as the independent oppositional publishers were able to be. Thus, a significant aspect of the publishing philosophy and operations of the university presses in South Africa is their service orientation. The university presses not only published scholarly works such as monographs and later edited collections, but also various publications in service to the universities, their parent institutions.

The editorial policies of the university presses thus shifted over time from a dual role, of publishing scholarly books and providing services to the university, to a more commercially oriented role focusing on scholarly and cross-over books for a wider audience. From the late apartheid era into the post-apartheid period, this would involve more list-building and commissioning than before, as well as more of an outward than inward focus in terms of authors and audience. In spite of differing roles and mandates within their institutions, this

79 Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS), ‘The South African Publishing Industry Report’ (Pretoria: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, 1998), p. 41.

happened at much the same time for all three of the university presses, perhaps largely due to increasing pressures towards commercialisation at the universities themselves. At the same time, the independent oppositional publishers were struggling for survival in a post-apartheid world which saw their funding diminish and sales fall. That the university presses managed to survive is due, in part, to continuing support from the universities, as well as the enduring importance of providing a platform for scholarly publishing and knowledge production.

What is striking in surveying the history of the university presses is the stability and continuity in their operations, in spite of constraints and developments in the wider publishing industry and within scholarly publishing as a niche area. To a large extent, the policies and procedures framing the operations of the presses have remained almost unchanged since the apartheid period. This has led to a certain amount of stability and even stolidity in their operations, in spite of the almost constant perception that they are living through crisis and decline. The literature shows that this balance between stability and change is typical for university presses overseas as well, as these have shown remarkable resilience throughout the twentieth century.⁸⁰

80 E.g. Abbott, 2008.

Into the Post-Apartheid Period

This ‘biography’ of the university presses inevitably raises questions of social and of intellectual history. In particular, these revolve around the shifts in political orientation of the university presses and the scholarly texts they published. This deepens our understanding of a specific, and highly complex, period in South African history. And, as Evans and Seeber point out, the social history of this country may be traced through the marker of “what was and what was not able to be published.”¹ This book thus examines “cultural, social, and textual histories as reflected and represented through editorial theory and practice.”²

The story of scholarly publishing in South Africa is, as others have pointed out in international contexts, a story of both great stability and great change.³ There has been great stability in terms of policies, organisation, and processes. This may be seen in the fact that, for instance, peer review policies have remained largely unchanged for fifty years or more. Complaints and concerns, especially regarding resources and managerial support, have remained relatively constant, too. But there have also been sweeping changes, in terms of both the publishing and the academic context: for example, there has been huge expansion in both the numbers and profile of academics in South Africa; at the same time, there have been technological developments that have changed both publishing processes and formats of distribution for publications; there has been a shift away from publishing local faculty (Abbott refers to this trend as a sign of “robust growth,” and it is also seen as an indicator of increasing professionalism⁴); there have been ongoing attempts at breaking into the international market to improve reach and sales; and there has been a rise in the number of edited volumes as opposed to single-author monographs.

1 Nicholas Evans and Monica Seeber (eds.), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 4.

2 John K. Young, *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African-American Literature* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), p. 185.

3 Andrew Abbott, ‘Publication and the future of knowledge,’ Plenary lecture to the Association of American University Presses (27 June 2008), Available online: <http://home.uchicago.edu/~aabbott/Papers/aaup/pdf>, p. 12.

4 Ibid., p. 19.

Some of these changes have been far-reaching, spiralling out from wider societal changes into the university domain, while others have been more closely related to the processes and economics of scholarly publishing. For example, the increasing influence of market forces can be seen in the changing relations between supply and demand (for symbolic and cultural goods as well as those with market value), as well as the growing professionalisation of authors and of publishers. In this regard, Bourdieu identifies two distinct strategies in publishing: “the logic of short-term profit, staking on quick sales and ephemeral success, and the logic of long-term investment, for the constitution of a stock of books likely to become ‘classical.’”⁵ These broader international trends have indeed been mirrored in South African scholarly publishing. Contemporary trends would include growing professionalisation, the use of technology, and – especially – increasing market pressures.

Perhaps the most striking change has come with the changing political dispensation. In addition to ideological, symbolic and market forces linked to colonialism, South Africa experienced a specific history of repression and attempted control over cultural and knowledge production during the twentieth century. The apartheid period’s repression, complicity and resistance forms the backdrop for this study, as the apartheid system and its accompanying legislation had a constraining effect on both academic freedom and scholarly publishing in South Africa. Indeed, the emergence of apartheid provoked a wide spectrum of responses, which can be plotted on a continuum from one extreme of collaboration, to the other extreme of resistance – or, as Andries Oliphant describes it, “[a] discourse of complicity and resistance, with all its shades of ambiguity...inscribed in the various literatures of South Africa.”⁶ In this book, I consider the location of South Africa’s university presses on such a scale of responses to apartheid, examining how their publishing programmes and histories reflect their insertion within a wider social context.

The university presses were established and published actively during a very complex and contested era in South African history. Their history is thus intertwined with the history of academic freedom and the struggles between academia and the government. The aim of this book is to reflect on academic freedom in South Africa during the apartheid era, and to contribute to the debates

5 Quoted in G. Sapiro, ‘The literary field between the state and the market,’ *Poetics*, 31 (2003), p. 452.

6 A.W. Oliphant, ‘From Colonialism to Democracy: Writers and Publishing in South Africa,’ in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds.), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 113.

on social and intellectual history during this period through an examination of local knowledge production.

This book describes the origins of university presses, both locally and abroad, examining their role as conceived at the time of establishment. The motivation for establishing university presses in South Africa usually related to the university's perception of itself as a significant research institution and knowledge producer, within a context where there were few local publishing platforms yet a growing research cohort. An attempt was made to trace the development of the presses' publishing philosophies and missions over time. It was shown that shifts are discernible in these publishing philosophies, often related to the role and influence of the members of the Publications Committees or to key staff members of the presses, but also to changes in the universities' missions, outlook and managerial approach.

Like any publisher, the university presses developed particular reputations – or accumulated cultural and symbolic capital – as a result of their publishing lists. These reputations have also accrued to their parent institutions. For instance, university presses confer prestige on their parent universities by associating them with research, by publishing distinguished academics, and by disseminating quality scholarly books. The selection of these titles is influenced by a great many individuals and institutions, including the editorial staff of the press, the members of the Publications Committee, and the academics used for the purposes of peer review. The origins and mandates of the university presses thus tell us a great deal about their perceptions of their own role as scholarly presses, as well as their broader social role.

In this study, I could only speculate as to why university presses were established at certain local universities, and, by extension, why were they *not* established at other universities. There are, for instance, no presses at the traditionally Afrikaner universities (except Unisa, which falls into this category to some extent) or the traditionally black universities (except Fort Hare, for a period), and this may be because of how these universities conceptualised their own role in society. The ideology of the institution is thus significant, as well as its attitude towards research. Paradoxically, a persistent perception of Unisa is that it is not a research-oriented institution, yet on the initiative of a group of research-minded professors, a publishing programme was established and has been maintained. Thus, another important factor is the personalities and influence of individuals at the different higher education institutions. Further research could be devoted to explaining how the other universities certified and circulated their research output, as well as what values they promoted and disseminated.

These two key factors in the establishment of a university press – the specific institutional milieu and ideology, and the role of individuals – receive

attention throughout the study. They are also significant factors in the direction of publishing philosophies, and in the gatekeeping function by which manuscripts are selected for publication. Indeed, the fact that the university presses functioned as integral departments of their respective parent institutions, rather than as autonomous business units, means that the institution influenced any and all publishing decisions, as well as operational decisions relating to strategy, structure, and staffing. Moreover, the varying value attributed to the university presses by their parent institutions can be traced in the fluctuating grants given by their institutions, and by the frequent reviews of their operations. It is thus not surprising, given their institutional constraints, that the local university presses were not as free in their publishing philosophy and selection decisions as the more independent oppositional publishers were able to be.

Examination of the origins and original mandates of the South African university presses reveals that they conformed to international models of scholarly publishing, and specifically the 'Oxford model.' However, it was found that they, like university presses in a developing country context elsewhere, are more likely to have a service mandate over and above their scholarly duties, to the extent that at Unisa the dual mandate of the press placed the emphasis more heavily on service than on publishing. Moreover, list-building or deliberate commissioning of titles would only emerge as the presses became more professional from the late 1980s onwards. This can be seen in the overlaps between the niches of the university presses, and in their lack of differentiation or deliberate commissioning until a much later date.⁷ At about the same time, the element of balancing scholarly merit and commercial concerns began to shift towards a much more commercial, profit-oriented outlook at the South African universities. This has been termed a growth in 'managerialism,' and is a world-wide trend among higher education institutions and university presses alike. The influence of managerialism has led to growing tensions between the 'cathedral' and the 'market.'

At the outset of this study, the expectation was that the university presses, in keeping with the international literature on academic freedom, would have played an oppositional, dissident or at least provocative role. However, the reality was more complex, sometimes ambiguous or even contradictory, and it also changed over time. This may be seen in the analysis of the publishing lists of the university presses, and the development of a continuum model to assess

7 See E. le Roux, 'Transforming a Publishing Division into a Scholarly Press: A Feasibility Study of the Africa Institute of South Africa' (MIS dissertation, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2007).

their political orientation. The application of the continuum of intellectual responses to the content analysis and author profiles of the university presses reveals a wide range of responses to apartheid, from the point of view of the authors, the content of works, and the philosophies of the presses themselves. This variance may even be found within each Press, suggesting that none of the university presses had a single political outlook that coloured all of its publishing decisions.

Increasingly, studies of higher education during the apartheid period are identifying the 'open' universities as somewhat conservative and cautious in their approach, in contrast to the earlier perception that they were very liberal or even radical in opposing apartheid. This study supports this shift in thinking, by showing that none of the university presses acted as an agent of change during the apartheid period. Like the majority of academics, the presses tended to support, or at least comply with, the status quo, rather than take the risk of confrontation or opposition. Thus, even if the university presses at Wits and Natal did publish books that may at times be classified in the categories of 'militant-radical' or 'political reform,' their own stance appeared to be one of tacit acceptance. This holds true for most, if not all, of the apartheid period, as their editorial policies shifted to become more politically aware and more outspoken right at the end of the 1980s. This late apartheid period saw more publishing of politically aware and critical texts.

Unisa Press, in contrast, was found to have allowed a certain amount of individualised dissent, within an atmosphere of what Marcum calls "repressive tolerance."⁸ Thus, the subject positions at Unisa – especially as reflected in the research output placed under the brand of the university itself – varied from compliance to openness, but with little direct challenge to the status quo. An image of reason and academic freedom could thus be promoted, at very little risk to the institution or its academics.

On the whole, then, the pressures to conform appear to have been greater than the pressures to oppose. An author profile of the university presses supports the main findings of the content analysis, as well as providing the further insight that the more radical or activist authors tended towards either publishing abroad or with the independent oppositional publishers, such as David Philip Publishers and Ravan Press, while the more conservative academics continued to publish with the university presses. On the whole, the university presses were not the first port of call for most local academics. Concerns about censorship and submission to the government's censorship apparatus drove

8 John A. Marcum, *Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa* (California: University of California Press, 1981).

this trend, as well as the need for greater world-wide visibility. There was certainly a perception among academics that university presses would not take a chance on controversial texts, and could not guarantee an author the benefits of widespread distribution and readership. Thus, the most important oppositional work of the apartheid era – even when scholarly in tone and audience – was not published by the university presses.

While the university presses made an attempt to offer a diversity of opinions and viewpoints, they were not oppositional in approach. Thus, the South African university presses did not respond to apartheid's repression, censorship and political pressures by playing an oppositional role. Eve Gray is right to argue that "the university presses failed to provide a space for radical views or marginalised voices."⁹ The university press, as a formal site of knowledge production, was not "conducive to the production of radical discourses."¹⁰

Part of the reason for this is institutional constraints, as well as societal ones. The university presses were certainly not in the same position of freedom to select manuscripts and authors as were the oppositional publishers. Some of the key factors constraining these presses include their gatekeeping practices, which depended on a system of peer review through the channel of a publications committee, itself made up of senior academics at the University. As this study shows, the review and selection processes sometimes stretched to the extent of self-censorship of politically uncomfortable topics, although not to overt censorship. Secondly, the oppositional publishers were largely funded by external or donor funding, and thus could take more risks than a publisher subsidised largely by the state, through the parent institution – again, the university. The university environment itself was thus a constraining factor in determining what would and would not be published by the university presses.

It has been noted that it is difficult to gauge the impact of a publishing house, whether an independent oppositional publisher or a university press. However, an attempt was made to track the reception and impact of local university press books, as research needs to be published and disseminated in order to reach an audience and make a contribution to the literature. This issue was considered from a few, related perspectives: distribution efforts from the university presses; marketing and especially advertising by the presses; and readership, as seen through reviews in local and international academic journals.

9 Eve Gray, 'Academic Publishing in South Africa,' in N. Evans and M. Seeber (eds.), *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000).

10 Mala Singh, 'Intellectuals in South Africa and the reconstructive agenda,' in George C. Bond and Angela Gilliam (eds.), *Social Construction of the Past* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 211.

To a much greater extent than expected, local university press books, especially from WUP and UNP, did reach the international scholarly community, and they were generally very well received. This insertion into the international community of scholars declined over time, especially in the 1980s, due in part to the growing isolation of South Africa and the academic boycott. It was at this stage, too, that the perception grew internationally that the university presses could not be considered oppositional publishers.

As this study has highlighted, the development of a coherent publishing list, based on a specific niche, is a key element of the 'Oxford model' for university presses. Yet analysis of the university presses' publishing lists reveals that, apart from a recent, more deliberate attempt at commissioning, the university presses have to a great extent followed a trend prevalent in South African scholarly publishing, of selecting their texts from unsolicited manuscripts. There has been little concerted attempt by any of South Africa's university presses to actively develop niches and build a coherent list. They are thus subject to the whims and research trends of individual academics, rather than gauging market needs. On the whole then, while they have developed strengths in a few areas, all of the university presses will need to engage in analysis of their publishing lists to develop coherent niche areas. This will also improve and target their marketing efforts.

Towards Progressive Publishing in the 1990s

As they entered the transitional period, towards the end of the apartheid era, the presses' publishing philosophy would grow more 'progressive,' to use their own terminology. The three key university presses were all managed by female directors in the late apartheid period of the 1980s and 1990s. These directors, who were extremely influential and somewhat hegemonic, influenced the increasingly liberal output and image of the presses during a time of decreasing restrictions. WUP began to describe itself in advertising materials as a "progressive publisher for a new South Africa,"¹¹ and both WUP and UNP joined the Independent Publishers' Association of South Africa (IPASA) when it was established in 1989; indeed, Eve Horwitz Gray was a founder member of the body.¹² The aim of this body was to promote freedom of speech and access to information, through lobbying for the repeal of repressive legislation and providing a platform for what became known as 'progressive' publishers. As part of this

¹¹ WUP advertisement (1990).

¹² Interview with Ms G (2014).

platform, WUP and UNP were able to take part in a 1990 promotion at book-seller CNA of 'progressive' books, under the banner 'The New South Africa.' The other publishers included in this promotion were David Philip Publishers, Skotaville, South African Institute of Race Relations, Taurus, Seriti sa Sechaba, Ravan Press, Ad Donker, Buchu Books and Justified Press – all what are now considered oppositional publishers.

At this time, in the early 1990s, WUP's advertising shows a shift to a new paratext, with a new corporate logo, and the slogans "Exciting and challenging publishing for a new South Africa" and "WUP looks to the future." With Gray at the helm in the early 1990s, the WUP publishing list reflects more commissioning, and a less reactive stance. This may be seen in a variety of titles emanating from the History Workshop. The list broadens to include more anthropology and sociology, more fiction, such as the work of playwright Athol Fugard, and more co-publications.

At the same time, however, UNP was bemoaning its "narrowness of list and its remoteness from the current debate in South Africa." Moberly went on to describe an opportunity:

At this time in South Africa there is an acute need for enlightened publishers to take a lead in the publishing of research material, works that bridge the huge divides in our society, that compete with overseas publications in terms of price, that focus on local issues and problems and engage what has been termed 'the current debate,' that challenge South Africans and begin the long haul to a post-apartheid society – any of these may be considered proper fields of activity for a University press.¹³

Moberly, supported by the Chairman of the Press Committee, Colin Gardner, made a good effort to publish more works on "the current debate" and the "proper fields of activity" at UNP. In an internal document titled 'Reconsiderations, 1989,' their position is explicitly laid out: "Not only does the Press help to publicise the University's research, it also helps to make known its position as an anti-apartheid organization."¹⁴ The document elaborates: "Most importantly this is through its contacts with overseas publishers and distributors through whom the Press is keeping open channels of communication with the

¹³ University of Natal Press, 'Response to the Report of the 1988 Review Committee' (Unpublished memorandum tabled 27 March 1990), UNA, p. 3.

¹⁴ University of Natal Press, 'Reconsiderations: 1989' (Unpublished internal document, September 1989), UNA, p. 1.

outside world. Including in its list of publications books which deal directly with the contemporary debate would also be significant in this regard." Thus, the shift in editorial policy, reflected in the publishing lists, was a deliberate one, based on discussion and agreement on the way forward – for both UNP and the country at large.

The promise of the post-apartheid era, of more diversity and new voices, was thus seen as an opportunity for the university presses, as this UNP discussion notes: "...there are particular publishing challenges in a changing South Africa. If we are allowed to look beyond mere survival I believe we can meet these challenges to make a significant contribution to the University's efforts in the nineties."¹⁵ These changes could also be felt in the changing stances of the universities, with new buzzwords of 'transformation' and 'integration' entering the fray. But transformation was not straightforward. Divisions within the universities were thrown into sharp relief by events such as the Makgoba affair at Wits. The enduring influence of the "conservative liberals" at the open universities was particularly criticised.¹⁶

Similarly, at Unisa, both lingering conservatism and an effort to meet the demands of a changing South Africa may be seen in the debate over the title of a collection published in 1991: *White But Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880–1940* (edited by Maurice Boucher and Robert Morrell). In an interview, a senior academic noted that Unisa Press was in many respects conservative in the late 1980s, and described disagreements over the title of this work.¹⁷ The Press, and a number of other scholars, saw the title as objectionable, because it was felt that it reflected badly on white people. However, the Press went ahead with publication, and elected to keep the title after strong support from a group of academics at Unisa. Another example is the work of Jacob P. Brits, a political historian. His major work, *Op die Voor-aand van Apartheid 1939–1948* (published by Unisa Press in 1994), looks at the historical trends leading up to 1948, the year the National Party was elected into power. It was considered unusually even-handed in approach, neither supporting nor condemning the National Party. In a review of the book for the *South African Historical Journal*, Furlong remarks on this balanced approach: "Although strongly critical of the actions of white politicians, he [Brits] speaks from within the Afrikaner tradition, critically but sympathetically, rather

15 Minutes of meetings of the Press Committee (20 June 1990), UNA.

16 Eddie Webster, 'Wit's going on? Revisiting the Makgoba affair,' *Southern Africa Report*, 13(2) (1998), p. 30.

17 Interview with Prof. G. (2012).

than as an iconoclast.”¹⁸ Furlong goes on to commend Brits’s “careful concern to appear evenhanded.” Similarly, Lubbe describes Brits as “’n selfkritiese Afrikaner-historikus” (‘a self-critical Afrikaner historian’).¹⁹ This example shows how *lojale verset* is characterised as being critical from within.

While never acting as a provocative or oppositional publisher, Unisa Press appears to have become more responsive to external events and influences during the 1980s and into the 1990s. For example, this period would see a text such as *Building a New Nation* published in 1991 – a text that would likely not have seen the light of day in the 1970s or even the 1980s. At this time, there is a distinct editorial shift, to include a growing interest in post-apartheid politics. The number of black authors increased, at the same time as ‘black’ issues received renewed focus. Thus, the 1990s revealed titles like *Dilemmas of African Intellectuals in South Africa* (1994); *A Man with a Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews* (1996); *The ANC and the Negotiated Settlement in South Africa* (1996); *South Africa in Transition: Focus on the Bill of Rights* (1996); and *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa* (1997). This direct engagement with current events, and the new perspectives offered, represented a real shift in publishing philosophy.

It seems that the growing liberalisation of the political sphere opened up the structural blockages impeding some academics from publishing in their own institutions, while also opening the way for the use of peer review as a tool by those who wished to perpetuate old agendas. This could not be proved by solid evidence from peer review files, but there is some evidence available, in the form of notes and the availability of reviewers and authors for interview. In one documented case (based on notes taken during a meeting, rather than its official record), a Unisa Press Publications Committee member attempted to block the review of a manuscript that conflicted with his theoretical stance – and just happened to be written by a foreigner as well.²⁰ In contrast, in at least two other cases, manuscripts that were *not* ready for publication were accepted into the publication process, in a clear effort to grow the numbers of black authors, after apartheid. In other words, peer review may be used as a tool for both exclusion *and* inclusion. But this is also part of the nature of gatekeeping: “The dual nature of gate-keeping is important to emphasise: that gate-keeping

18 Patrick J. Furlong, ‘The eve of apartheid: An appraisal,’ *South African Historical Journal*, 35(1) (1996), p. 216.

19 Henriëtte Lubbe, ‘Die Afrikaner wil ’n *vaste* beleid hê: ’n Ontleding van die ontstaan van apartheid,’ *South African Historical Journal*, 25(1) (1996), p. 227.

20 Interview with Prof. Z. (2012).

can function as exclusion and control, on the one hand, and inclusion and facilitation, on the other.”²¹

The university presses also displayed a renewed focus on the rest of Africa, once the new government had been installed in 1994. For example, WUP stated in a press release: “With the launch of five new books dealing with Mozambique, WUP has become the definitive publisher on that country’s history.”²² This was stated without irony, in spite of the clear elements of a paternal approach promoting South African neo-colonisation or appropriation of especially the near parts of the continent. WUP now refers to itself as being strategically positioned as a publisher on the African continent – as, indeed, do the other university presses. Marketing materials for the presses underscore this new emphasis: WUP argues that it is “strategically placed at the crossroads of African and global knowledge production”²³ and Unisa Press that it has “a primary focus on the African continent.”²⁴ Indeed, Unisa Press goes on to quote the Africanist scholar Amilcar Cabral in this context: “Each of you has to have the courage to shoulder the responsibility of being an African at this decisive moment in the history of our peoples.”

Similarly, in line with changing university policies and strategic objectives, and as a reflection of the opening up of South Africa after the democratic elections in 1994, the university presses began a deliberate policy of selecting texts with an African perspective. Thus, a survey of UKZN Press’s latest catalogues reveals a clear focus on the rest of the continent as well as its insertion into the KwaZulu-Natal region. More titles have also been published in the other official South African languages during this transitional period (there are nine, in addition to English and Afrikaans). The presses also began to seek co-publishing deals and partnerships with other publishers much more actively, to re-insert themselves into a wider international scholarly publishing community. As a result of such publishing decisions, the university presses are now beginning to set an agenda for scholarly publishing in South Africa, rather than simply reacting to or indeed remaining aloof from current events.

The other key policy focus areas in the 1990s in higher education circles were governance, effectiveness and responsiveness to social needs. This may be seen at the university presses in a shift to a more commercial direction. The mix of

21 L. Husu, ‘Gate-keeping, gender equality and scientific excellence,’ in *Gender and Excellence in the Making* (Brussels: European Commission, 2004), p. 70.

22 WUP press release (13 June 1995), WUA.

23 WUP, ‘About us’ (2012). Available online: <http://witspress.co.za/about-us/>.

24 Unisa Press, ‘About us’ (2012). Available online: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=14538>.

publications produced changed to include more cross-over texts, and especially textbooks, in the 1990s. This move into the textbook market has not been entirely successful. It has often been taken for granted that the local university presses have always published textbooks, especially for their own students. For instance, Andrew notes that: "The South African University Presses therefore tend to publish at the upper end of the general book market, as well as publishing tertiary textbooks."²⁵ This has only been the case in recent years, as the majority of textbooks for South African students continue to be published by commercial academic publishers, both local and international. The local university presses have published tertiary-level textbooks where possible, in an attempt to supplement their income and cross-subsidise more scholarly works with a niche audience. An early example of a successful textbook produced by Unisa Press was the *Handbook of the Speech Sounds and Sound Changes in the Bantu Languages of South Africa* (simultaneously published in Afrikaans, 1967), edited by Dirk Ziervogel. This hardcover, 335-page book would go through several editions and reprints.

The same imperatives had a different effect on the publishing list at UNP: after discussion relating to the direction and editorial policies of the Press, an imprint was especially created, named Hadedu Books, to publish books that "look beyond the academic community to the wider reading public."²⁶ UNP also published tertiary textbooks, where possible, and was even known to reject manuscripts for publication where the necessary prescriptions could not be obtained. This is a clear signal of growing commercialisation, and a shift in the mission of the university press in the post-apartheid era.

The editorial policies of the university presses thus shifted over time from a dual role, of publishing scholarly books and providing services to the university, to a more commercially oriented role focusing on scholarly and cross-over books for a wider audience. From the late apartheid era into the post-apartheid period, this would involve more list-building and commissioning than before, as well as more of an outward than inward focus in terms of authors and audience. In spite of differing roles and mandates within their institutions, this happened at much the same time for all three of the university presses, perhaps largely due to increasing pressures towards commercialisation at the universities themselves. At the same time, the independent oppositional publishers struggled for survival in a post-apartheid world which saw their external funding diminish, relevance decline, and sales fall. That the university presses managed to survive is due, in part, to continuing support from the universities, as well as

25 Jeff Andrew, *Publishing Market Profile: South Africa* (London: British Council and The Publishers Association, 2004), p. 76.

26 Hadedu publicity leaflet (1993), UNA.

the enduring importance of providing a platform for scholarly publishing and knowledge production.

While the study has not specifically evaluated the university presses' ability to cope with the fast-changing demands of publishing in the twenty-first century, the trends and patterns described assist in pointing the way for the presses to adapt and survive. At the same time, it seems that South Africa's publishing industry has evolved, in step with much of the rest of the scholarly publishing world, from "ideological constraints" to "mercantile constraints."²⁷ For instance, Unisa Press started its life as a publishing services department, rather than being considered a fully fledged university-based publishing house from the outset. As Unisa is a distance education institution, the design, creation and printing of study material has always been an important part of its function, and the role of Publishing Services was to ensure that study material was properly costed, and that professional layout and design were applied, before it was passed on to a (separate) Department of Print Production for printing. Today, Unisa Press features prominently in the university's strategic plan, with the bold aim of becoming a "publishing power house" on the African continent.²⁸ This implies a real shift in emphasis and business model, from an inward-looking department, supplying services, to an outward-focused publishing house serving a much larger community of scholars.

Implications for Book History

From a theoretical perspective, this discussion of the milieu of university press publishing has certain implications for the dominant models of book history. These models have various limitations when applied to highly unconventional modes of publishing. Both university press and oppositional publishing is mission-driven, rather than profit-driven, yet traditional models such as those of Darnton or Adams and Barker do not provide sufficient space for the interpretation of mission or its impact on publishing philosophy and decisions.²⁹ In this study, too, the publishers in question are subsumed within a larger, institutional whole, and their missions are subordinate to a wider university mission, which has great implications for their activities and publishing output. Furthermore,

²⁷ Sapiro, 'The literary field,' p. 460.

²⁸ Unisa, *2015 Strategic Plan: An Agenda for Transformation* (Pretoria: Unisa, 2005), p. 16.

²⁹ Robert Darnton, 'What is the history of books?,' *Daedalus*, 111 (3) (1982), pp. 65–83; Thomas Adams and Nicholas Barker, 'A New Model for the Study of the Book,' in Nicholas Barker (ed.), *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society* (London: British Library, 1993).

the overriding importance of the external political context had an insidious influence on all publishing decisions as well as business operations.

The cyclical model may well break down when placed within the context of a highly constrained institution within a repressive society. Thus, at every stage of Darnton's publishing cycle, a new break or disjuncture could be introduced: for instance, between author and publisher, there may be systemic reasons why authors were unable to access certain publishing platforms. Between publishing decision and production, there would be gatekeeping practices (especially important in a university context, where peer review is considered primary) that could prevent publication from continuing, as well as self-censorship. Funding constraints could also arise, to prevent publication. Between production and distribution, the threat of government censorship or banning orders loomed. Distribution could also be disrupted by lack of access to mainstream dissemination channels, or, again, by a lack of funding, or even by extraneous factors such as the academic boycott. And even though authors and readers belonged to the same academic community, there was often a breakdown in communication between publishers and the readership they served. This could be related to a disjuncture in aims between academics and the university presses, or to the politics of exile, or to issues as diverse as language, affordability and geographic location.

As a result, the social and geographic setting, and the particular nature of a publisher, may have implications for the kinds of models that are appropriate for structuring an examination of a publishing history – rather than the study of a particular book title, series, author or reader. This discussion of the social history of the university presses thus relies on less orthodox models, in particular the continuum model of intellectual responses to apartheid derived from political sociology. These responses have been classified within three main 'codes,' to use Stuart Hall's terminology: the dominant-hegemonic code, the negotiated code, and the oppositional code. Using a continuum model, instead of the usual cyclical models, has enabled us to trace shifts over time, as well as ambiguities and inconsistencies. The impact of the environment on the continuum also changes over time, opening up a bigger space for dissenting voices and differences of opinion.

The Continuing Importance of Academic Freedom

At the conclusion of this study, the question may be asked: Does it matter? In other words, does it matter that the South African university presses failed their most radical potential authors? Does it matter that they did not speak out

in favour of academic freedom until the dying years of the apartheid period? The answer depends very much on one's view of the role and function of a university press in society. A debate around the ethics of the university thus arises – what are the core rights and obligations of the academic or of the academic department? And are these the same for the university press, which is an integral part of the university and of the scholarly communication cycle? Do universities, and by extension their publishing arms, have an obligation to speak truth to power? Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the freedom of expression for teaching and publishing, and freedom of information for conducting research.³⁰ If we accept this Universal Declaration, then it means that universities and their constituent parts should be tasked with upholding and transmitting the important values of a search for truth, critique, and integrity.

In support of such a position, during a lecture in the Richard Feetham series on academic freedom, Mittelman argued:

The university is a site of contestation not only because of its role in the production of knowledge and the reproduction of societal values, but also because it is a source of critical thought. The intellectual vocation is to advance social criticism – an appraisal of the assumptions, origins, and possible transformation of a given framework of action – so that a society may elevate itself and realise its potential. If so, academics have a responsibility to articulate alternative forms of action.³¹

Similarly, De Kiewiet was to argue during the 1960 T.B. Davie Memorial Lecture:

The definition [of academic freedom] which seems to have the most dignity and creative meaning is the right of scholarship to the pursuit of knowledge in an environment in which the emancipating powers of knowledge are the least subject to arbitrary restraints. This means that scholarship and the teaching or writing in which it expresses itself must be free to deal with the major problems or issues of the age. It is vital that we go beyond freedom to pursue knowledge for its own sake, and claim for scholarship today a greater and freer role in relieving mankind of inequality, injustice, deprivation, fear, ignorance or anger. I know these

30 Antoon De Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide, 1945 to 1990* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 24.

31 James Mittelman, 'Academic freedom, transformation and reconciliation,' *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 25(1) (1997), p. 45.

are emotional words. I know also that there is a more severe definition of academic freedom that fears these responsibilities, but as an historian, I reply that we have reached a period of history where the laboratory and the library of the university are no longer within an ivory tower. Academic responsibilities have evolved with history and have become co-extensive with it.³²

If we are to accept the arguments made by such academics, then the role of the university press, no less than any other department or institute of the university, should be to promote academic freedom. In fact, some would see this as the central role for university press publishing.

Post-apartheid scholarship is now arguing that the greatest threat to scholarly publishing and the freedom of expression implied by that form of publishing, may not come from traditional threats to academic freedom, but rather from the growing influence of market pressures. In other words, if short-term commercialism is to take precedence over long-term academic merit, then that would constitute a distinct threat to the freedom of the academic to conduct research and to publish that research in any area of knowledge (without having to be mindful of the market value of that research). With their unique business model, in the form of mission-driven publishing, university presses have an important part to play in maintaining the balance between the cathedral and the market. As a result, the role of the university press – I would argue – thus matters a great deal to the ongoing value of intellectuals and scholarly knowledge production in society.

32 Quoted in G.R. Bozzoli, *Academic freedom in South Africa: The open universities in South Africa and academic freedom 1957–1974* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Juta, 1974), p. 433.

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